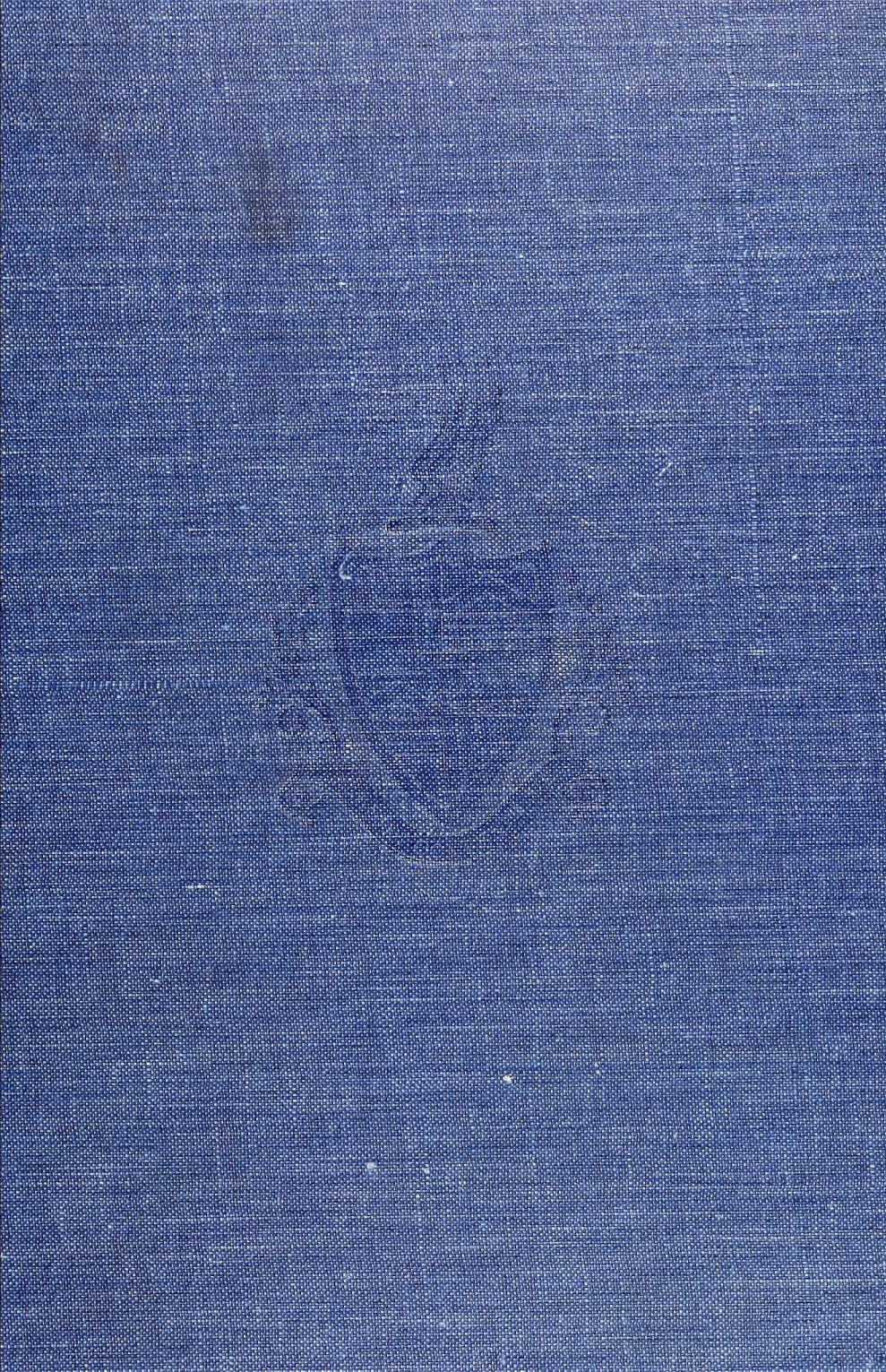
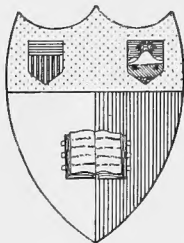




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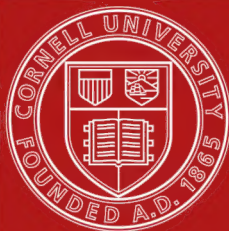
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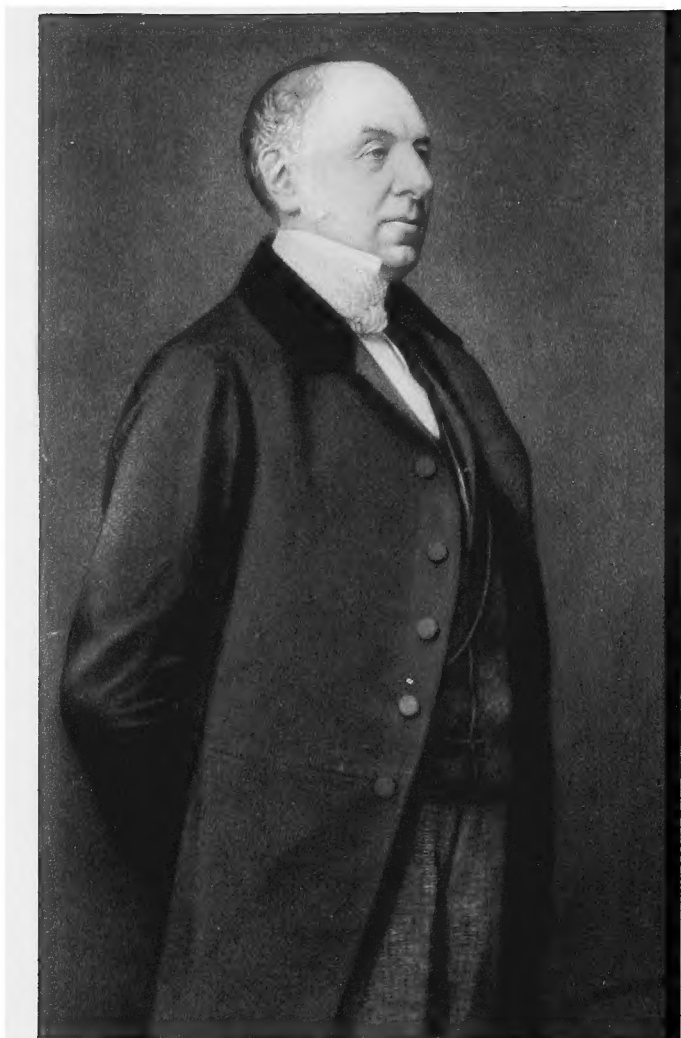


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LIFE AND LETTERS
OF SIR JAMES GRAHAM



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LIFE AND LETTERS OF SIR JAMES GRAHAM

SECOND BARONET OF NETHERBY, P.C., G.C.B.

1792—1861

BY

CHARLES STUART PARKER

HONORARY FELLOW OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, OXFORD
FORMERLY M.P. FOR THE COUNTY AND FOR THE CITY OF
PERTH; EDITOR OF 'THE LIFE OF SIR ROBERT PEEL
FROM HIS PRIVATE PAPERS'

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

VOL. II

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1907

J. K.

PRINTED BY
HAZELL, WATSON AND VINEY, LD.,
LONDON AND AYLESEBURY.

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LIFE AND LETTERS

OF

SIR JAMES GRAHAM

CHAPTER I

1845

7

Loss of Stanley and of Gladstone—More Work for Graham—Changes at the Board of Trade—Free Trade Budget—Renewed Income Tax—Sugar—Tea—‘Principal Defence of the Corn Law’—Conciliatory Policy for Ireland—Maynooth—Attitude of Disraeli, and O’Connell—Queen’s Colleges—Roman Catholics in the Colonies—Home Defence—Speeches and Letters on Corn Laws.

IN the two last years of Peel’s great Administration—memorable for conciliatory policy in Ireland, and for active furtherance of Free Trade—the labours that fell on Graham, as on Peel, were increased by two important changes. Stanley, on whose friendship and readiness in debate Graham had been used to rely, had gone to the House of Lords, and another most efficient colleague, Gladstone, just when his growing knowledge of finance, exceptional capacity for hard work, and powerful eloquence would have been most valuable in office, from persistent scruples as to increasing an

inadequate grant to Maynooth, thought it necessary to resign.

Enclosing a long letter from him to that effect, Peel writes to Graham :

January 3.—I really have great difficulty sometimes in comprehending what Gladstone means. I take for granted, however, that his letter means to announce his continued intention to retire, and I greatly regret it. . . . Is it not strange that this letter marked 'Secret'—and being secret if ever letter was—came to me this morning by post *open* ? It may have been read in every post office through which it has passed.

Graham's answer is flavoured with the sarcasm in which he was prone to indulge.

January 4.—It is always difficult through the haze of words to catch a distant glimpse of Gladstone's meaning. But though the letter is obscure, the resolution, I am afraid, is taken ; and you must consider this note as an announcement that, if we proceed with our Maynooth measure, he will retire.

His loss is serious, and on every account to be regretted ; but I do not think that we should be justified in averting it by abandonment of a most important part of our Irish policy, which the state of that country renders urgently necessary, if indeed it be not indispensable, for the maintenance of the Union, and for the safety of the State.

Gladstone's omission to seal such a letter was most unfortunate ; but the enigmatical style has its advantages. I doubt whether there is a post-master in England who after reading the letter would understand one word of it.

Peel did not even yet abandon hope of retaining Gladstone's services.

January 20.—I wrote a letter to Gladstone, of which I send a copy. . . . Suppose he remains.

Graham replies :

January 21.—Until we know Gladstone's final decision, it does not appear to me prudent to take any step whatever.

But next day Sir Robert Peel announced :

Gladstone renews in writing his fixed resolution to leave us on the Maynooth question. I am not at all alarmed, and must forthwith consider the best means of repairing the heavy blow, and great discouragement, of the simultaneous loss of Stanley and Gladstone.

This resignation was the more annoying because Gladstone had begun to see his way to support the Maynooth Bill, out of office. But Peel's patience, and respect for a scruple of conscience, however little he might share it, were unlimited. Gladstone has recorded that, in conversation on the subject, 'Peel's tone and manner were as kind as at any time—nothing like murmur. At the same time he thought it right to intimate a belief that the Government might very likely be shipwrecked upon the Maynooth question, partly in connection with my retirement.'¹

Graham writes to the Lord Lieutenant :

Gladstone's secession on religious grounds exposes our Maynooth measure to danger, and of course brings into peril the existence of the Government. It is true that his scruples are placed by him not so much on the ground of political misgivings, or religious qualms, as of written pledges and printed declarations in works published with his name. But still the general impression will be that he suffers for conscience' sake, and it is impossible to foresee how strong may be the excitement which this act of one member of our Cabinet may produce.

¹ Morley's *Gladstone*, i. 274.

We are, however, steady to our purpose. We shall adhere firmly to our Irish policy, and we shall bring before Parliament the measures which with your assistance we have matured.

But, to give to this policy the best chance of success, it is necessary instantly to repair the breach in our line which the loss of Gladstone has created. Sir Robert Peel is actively employed in endeavouring to accomplish it. The operation is critical, and the danger not inconsiderable, but I have unbounded confidence in the skill and courage of our chief, and the members of the Cabinet who stand firm and united present still a front which will not easily be overborne.

January 27.—Sir Robert Peel has gone to Windsor, and will there consult Her Majesty. From that quarter we shall receive the utmost support and assistance which any Ministry can desire.

January 28.—Sir Robert Peel proposed to Sidney Herbert that he should go to Ireland as Secretary, but Herbert was unwilling to accept the appointment, except on the condition that it should be temporary, and that at the end of the next session an arrangement should be made for his admission into the Cabinet with some office in England.

Sir Robert Peel foresaw that any such arrangement was open to insuperable objections, because it would transpire, and deprive the temporary occupant of the place of all authority and usefulness; and because also it would fetter his own future discretion with engagements which might be inconvenient. In these circumstances he was compelled to forego the advantage of Sidney Herbert's services in Ireland.

The arrangement now proposed—and it may be considered settled—is :

Lord Dalhousie, President of the Board of Trade, not in the Cabinet; Mr. Cardwell, Vice-President of the Board of Trade; Sir Thos. Fremantle, Secretary for Ireland; Mr. Sidney Herbert, Secretary at War, in the Cabinet; Earl of Lincoln, Chief Commissioner of Works, in the Cabinet.

Sir Robert Peel and I join in hoping that Fremantle's appointment will be agreeable to you. He is a man of

the most amiable manner, and of tried discretion. He is diligent in business, of good address in managing persons, and has an intimate knowledge of county affairs, and of the duties of the magistracy, he himself having been a Chairman of Quarter Sessions for many years. His mother is a Roman Catholic, all his sisters are Roman Catholics, Sir Henry Fitzherbert, an English Roman Catholic of ancient family, is his brother-in-law, and from his connection therefore he cannot be suspected of strong anti-Catholic antipathies. Moreover, his own views of Irish policy are decidedly liberal. He voted for Roman Catholic Emancipation. His confidence in Sir Robert Peel's judgment is unbounded, and I am certain that you will exercise great influence over him, and that you will find him an honourable and faithful colleague, well worthy of your confidence and esteem.

To the retiring Chief Secretary, Lord Eliot, now Earl of St. Germans, Graham writes :

I am truly sorry to have lost your able assistance at this critical and important juncture. You have contributed much to bring affairs to the point where a better policy may be adopted without a violent shock to the feelings and passions of the Irish Protestants, and you have effected this great object by a steady adherence to your own sound and generous sentiments, amidst the clamour of much abuse and the strong pressure of adverse influence.

The Government being thus reconstituted, the first business of the session was the Budget. On account of its importance it was introduced by Sir Robert Peel, and it was in full accordance with principles long adopted by Sir James Graham.

As in 1842, the necessary basis of the whole was income tax. This, Parliament being willing to renew it, supplied the means for a further drastic revision of the tariff in the sense of freer trade. All export duties were swept

away. Duties on raw materials were further reduced. Import duties on 430 articles producing little revenue were abolished. Sugar was relieved of taxation to the amount of £1,300,000.

Sir James Graham had urged on Sir Robert Peel to revise also the duties on tea, partly as 'the principal luxury of the poor,' partly as a means of promoting trade with China, whence at that time nearly all our tea came. But the surplus of 1845, even with renewed income tax, was not found sufficient for relieving tea as well as sugar. Even sugar presented difficulties.

An amendment by Lord John Russell, condemning the distinction between free-labour and slave-labour sugar, was rejected by a majority of 94; and a Protectionist motion for applying the surplus partly to relief of the agricultural interest was defeated by 213 votes against only 78. It was on this occasion that Disraeli remarked, 'Protection appears to be in about the same state as Protestantism was in 1828.' Peel in reply reminded Disraeli that only some three years ago he had himself extolled the tariff of 1842 as being 'in exact, permanent, and perfect consistency with the principles of Free Trade, laid down by Mr. Pitt.'

Shortly before the debate Peel had sent to Graham an agricultural petition for a grant in aid, remarking :

I am sure nothing could be more injurious to the agricultural interest than to stir such questions as compliance with the enclosed would stir. That interest would have to bear their share of the burden imposed upon the Consolidated Fund, and many other parties now paying rates would be relieved equally with them—mines, collieries, factories, and so forth. Surely this admits of demonstration.

And Graham had replied :

If the landlords insist on the removal of burdens which affect land especially, they will destroy the principal defence of the Corn Law, and have no ground of resistance to the League.

To Lord Heytesbury he continues to report :

February 13.—You may rest assured that we shall firmly persevere in our Irish policy. We may be driven from the helm, but we shall not vary our course while we are responsible for the conduct of affairs.

February 15.—Sir Robert Peel brought forward our great financial project yesterday in a very able speech which on the whole was well received. The country gentlemen were sullen and silent, but the Whigs were disheartened, and the representatives of the great manufacturing and commercial interests are enlisted under our banner, and will form a body-guard which will protect us from all danger of defeat, let the attack be whence it may.

March 1.—We have had a severe week in the House of Commons. I am willing to hope and believe that we have surmounted some of our principal difficulties ; but we have an able and powerful and a most unscrupulous Opposition in array against us ; and the daily labour and fatigue are too much for mind and body.

March 9.—I think that our difficulties with respect to property tax and sugar are nearly surmounted. You are aware that I always regarded the latter subject as beset with danger. Our measure does not rest on grounds which I can consider permanently satisfactory. Sufficient however for the day is the evil, and unless something unforeseen occur—which in a popular assembly seldom fails to happen—I should say that the principal difficulties of the session are overcome.

I shall be anxious to hear the result of your interview with the Roman Catholic prelates. I am persuaded that, without giving them any promise, you will have been enabled to sustain their courage, and to keep them steady in their adherence to our policy.

March 22.—Sir Robert Peel will himself bring forward the Maynooth Bill on the 3rd of April. A storm is evidently gathering, but the sooner it breaks the better. Mr. Ward has given notice of an amendment that the funds required for Maynooth shall be drawn from the revenues of the Protestant Church in Ireland. This proposal, gravely made, is significant, and ought not to be an obstacle to the success of our measure.

It is possible, however, that all our enemies, political and religious, may combine against us ; but I foresaw the danger when first I urged the policy of this measure, and its threatening aspect does not shake my conviction that it is necessary, wise, and just.

Before Easter the Income Tax Bill, Sugar Duties Bill, and Tariff Bill had all been passed by the Commons. In April followed the Maynooth Bill.

The proposal to increase the State endowment of a Roman Catholic College caused great excitement among zealous Protestants, and on the second reading there was a long debate. In the course of this Mr. Smythe, a member of the ‘Young England’ party, taunted Ministers with having formerly proclaimed that ‘concession had reached its utmost limits.’ In reply to this, with manly frankness, Sir James Graham rose, and expressed his sorrow that he had ever used such language.

If I have given offence to Ireland, I deeply regret it, and I can only say, from the very depth of my heart, that my actions have been better than my words.

The taunts about the past were amplified by Mr. Smythe’s ally, Mr. Disraeli, in the well-known speech in which he attacked Sir Robert Peel as ‘a great parliamentary middleman,’ and called upon the House of Commons to ‘tell persons in high places that cunning is

not caution, and habitual perfidy is not high policy of State,' etc.

In pleasing contrast to such malicious onslaughts, O'Connell, in a letter to Mr. Patrick Mahony, wrote :

April 19.—Sir James Graham's speech was delightful. I heartily forgive him everything past—trial, persecution, sentence, and all. The Ministry appear to be really sincere in their determination to do something for Ireland. They have raised hopes infinitely beyond the Maynooth grant.

Nor was his gratitude confined to private intercourse. At the next meeting of the Repeal Association he made his acknowledgments in public :

Now for the first time in my life I have the opportunity of praising Sir James Graham, and I do so most cordially on account of his manly speech on the Maynooth Endowment. I hold out both hands to him with forgiveness for the past ; and I think he should be placed on a pedestal with the inscription on it ' Justice to Ireland.'

The House of Commons also showed its appreciation of the liberal policy pursued by Peel and Graham, and its indifference to partisan harangues against them, by giving them, in defiance of much adverse feeling in the constituencies, a majority of 147 ; to the great delight of the Queen, who had written to Peel, ' The measure is so great and good a one, that people must open their eyes, and will not oppose it.'

In Committee opposition to the policy was renewed by Mr. Ward, who moved that the endowment for Maynooth should be taken from the funds of the Protestant Established Church. This proposal was supported by Macaulay, who denounced the Church as

‘the most indefensible of all our institutions.’ But in support of their proposal they could muster only 148 votes against 322, and in the House of Lords the Bill, moved by the Duke of Wellington, was carried by a majority of 131.

During the progress of the Bill Sir James had written to Lord Heytesbury :

April 12.—In point of argument nothing could be more miserable than the display last night in opposition to the Maynooth Bill. Gladstone made a speech which made nothing so clear as that he had no ground for resigning his office. We shall carry the second reading by a large majority. The Bill will pass, but our party is destroyed.

The Whigs in this stage will give us a firm support, but we shall have a protracted struggle, and in the course of it they are quite capable of playing us some slippery trick.

A large body of our supporters is mortally offended, and in their anger they are ready to do anything either to defeat the Bill or to revenge themselves upon us. In such circumstances our position is necessarily critical.

Still Sir Robert Peel has a strong hold on the public mind, and on the House of Commons, without distinction of parties ; and at no time was the Crown more willing and ready to give a cordial support and assistance to a favoured Minister.

Moreover, if I mistake not, we shall make some impression on the warm feelings of the Irish, and the justice of our measure combined with its policy will make its way, and render it difficult for any rival who may overthrow us to stand if we fall.

As soon as the Maynooth Bill was safe, Graham introduced and carried through the House of Commons another part of his conciliatory policy, a Bill for founding and endowing three new Colleges in Ireland. This, on account of its providing neither Catholic

nor Protestant instruction in religion, was obstinately opposed by O'Connell, Archbishop McHale, Sir Robert Inglis, and others, but passed by large majorities, without concessions, and at a meeting of Catholic prelates a vote of thanks was passed for 'the generous intention of the Government to extend the benefits of academical education in Ireland.'

A selection from Sir James Graham's correspondence during this session may give some notion of the multiplicity and importance of questions that pressed upon him for immediate action or attention.

To Mr. Croker

March 22.—I am aware of the fact that our country gentlemen are out of humour, and that the existence of the Government is endangered by their present temper.

The country gentlemen cannot be more ready to give us the death-blow than we are to receive it. If they will rush on their own destruction, they must have their way. We have endeavoured to save them, and they regard us as enemies for so doing.

If we have lost the confidence and goodwill of the country party, our official days are numbered. But the time will come when this party will bitterly deplore the fall of Sir Robert Peel, and when in vain they will wish that they had not overthrown a Government which its enemies could not vanquish, but which its supporters abandoned and undermined.

To Lord Heytesbury

May 10.—The reception of our plan of Collegiate Education in Ireland in the House of Commons was more favourable than I had anticipated.

The measure indeed was pronounced to be a gigantic scheme of Godless education. But the endowment of a Christian seminary at Maynooth seems to be less acceptable than this refusal to interfere at all with religious creeds.

I shall be anxious to know what effect our scheme produces on the public mind in Ireland. I am afraid that the Roman Catholic priesthood will be jealous of the loss of power and direct control over the education of the youth of the laity belonging to their Church. Sheil evidently anticipates with fear the force of this objection. If we succeed in carrying the measure into practical operation, it will emancipate the rising generations from the thralldom of priestly domination. The Roman Catholics in the House of Commons, yielding to first impressions, were evidently well pleased.

Several letters indicate how decidedly Graham, more even than Peel, pressed their joint policy of conciliation for Ireland.

To Sir Robert Peel

May 11.—I am very reluctant to contemplate the necessity of applying force to the suppression of these Repeal meetings, which I regard as a desperate effort to revive an evil spirit that has evaporated. At all events, it is desirable, if the public peace be not broken or seriously endangered, to await the moral effect of the measures which we have introduced, and which, I am persuaded, will not be inoperative.

From Sir Robert Peel

I am inclined to think that we ought to interfere, by proclamation in the first instance, with the renewed attempt at monster meetings, on the very first occasion on which the law will clearly enable us to interfere.

To Sir Robert Peel

May 13.—Looking to the judgment at York on Hunt's trial in the Peterloo case, and Chief Justice Tindal's judgment in the Bristol case, coupled with the advice given to me by Pollock and Follett during the riots in 1842, I have come to the conclusion that there is great risk in proclaiming a meeting, and in preventing the assemblage, or in dispersing it, on the ground of numbers

only, without any information on oath deposing to an apprehension of a breach of the peace.

I have requested the Lord Lieutenant to keep us constantly and accurately informed of any movement. But, as the case stands, I confess that I have doubts whether the law would warrant our interference. The Clontarf case in 1843 was very special.

May 26.—Enclosed is a report on the Tara meeting. The order and sobriety of the assembly give to it an imposing character not to be despised.

In answer to a request from Mr. Croker for help to write a political article, Sir James writes :

May 24.—My private secretary will gladly give you any assistance in his power. As for me, I am hardly able to stagger on under the load of business and of care which oppresses me ; but I am willing always to co-operate with you to the best of my ability.

And Mr. Croker replies :

May 25.—I have not been an inattentive nor unsympathising observer of your labour and your cares. I think *you* have had hard luck and scant measure of support. I wish I could find any fit occasion to endeavour to do you justice. All the work and all the odium falls on Peel and you, and except your two selves there seems to be no one capable of saying of you what your two selves cannot say. I feel all this very deeply, and wish—as Byron said when the big fellow was licking Peel at Harrow—that I could take a share.

To Lord Stanley

May 24.—You must dispose [in the Lords] of Maynooth before you open the Landlord and Tenant Bill. In the meantime we must finally settle our measure, and obtain the sanction of the Cabinet.

When you introduce it, it will be quite necessary to go at length into the subject, and to make our plan clearly intelligible, and its limits distinctly understood. The first impression on this subject is the most important.

To Lord Heytesbury

June 4.—We carried the second reading of the College Bill by a large majority, but Lord John evidently gave a reluctant support, accompanied by a bitter speech ; and he and many of our political opponents, while they consented to the second reading, studiously laid the ground for opposition in subsequent stages under various and opposite pretexts of objections to clauses.

I consider the meeting at Dublin a serious affair. It will be followed up by a similar demonstration at Cork. They must be regarded as strong indications of national feeling, and in my eye they are not less formidable because they are beyond the reach of the law, and because they are conducted with order and decorum.

We can only watch, and endeavour to counteract the evils of the moment as they arise, while we steadily pursue the remedial process which goes to the root of the mischief, and which, if Great Britain will allow it, might ultimately effect the cure.

To Sir Robert Peel

June 8. Private.—I have frankly stated to Lord Heytesbury the dangers and the difficulties which beset the College Bill. He draws the inference that we contemplate its abandonment. I have not stated to him or to any one the impossibility of adopting this alternative, or the necessity, of which I am convinced, that if we fail to carry this measure the duty of governing Ireland must be entrusted to other hands.

To Lord Stanley

WHITEHALL, *June 22, 1845.*

I have summoned a Cabinet for to-morrow at one o'clock, and we must consider very carefully the remonstrance of the Irish Peers against the *principle* of your Irish Landlord and Tenant Bill.

To give up the right of the tenant to improve within the limits of the Bill, even without the consent of the landlord, by the application of his own capital or industry, will be a most important departure from our proposal,

and will strip the measure of all grace to the tenant, and of much of its practical utility with reference to the social condition of Ireland.

The five landlords on the Commission contemplated tenants' improvements with which the estate should be charged, even though the owner had not consented beforehand.

After Parliament rose, Sir James continued to write to the Lord Lieutenant on Irish policy.

August 10.—It is premature to speak of a University when the new colleges do not yet exist; but still it is wise in time to fix on an object to which you may steer when a new course is to be shaped. I have the strongest opinion that, *Trinity College* being preserved intact, *Dublin University* ought to be opened to the new colleges. Parliament would not be slow to provide University scholarships and exhibitions, if a just and liberal University arrangement could be effected; and the University of Dublin might then be made a great national institution, conferring the greatest benefit on the total people of Ireland. If without alarming sectarian prejudices you could effect this great object with the concurrence of the governing body in *Trinity College*, it would be a masterpiece of policy worthy of the highest praise.

Attention also must be given to the preparation of a County Franchise Bill. In my opinion there is no use in attempting to withhold from Ireland any popular privilege which has been conceded in England.

As matters stand in counties, how small is the constituency (compared with the population) over which democratic influence nevertheless now preponderates! The grievance alone remains, the power which it was intended to perpetuate is gone; and in these circumstances sound policy dictates the removal of the grievance, and the establishment of a *bona-fide* equality of civil privilege, on the footing of England.

He discussed also a suggestion sent to him by Peel for Roman Catholic endowment in the Colonies.

*To Sir Robert Peel*WHITEHALL, *August 20, 1845.*

The British Government for the last thirteen years has steadily refused to introduce into the Colonial Estimate any new charge for religious establishments.

Bishop Walsh asks for assistance from the State in training the Roman Catholic youth destined for the priesthood in the Colonies. No such assistance is given to the Established Church. If it were asked, I doubt much whether Parliament would grant it. Voluntary contributions from the members of the Establishment supply the funds which educate and endow the colonial clergy. At this very time a college is about to be founded at Canterbury for the education of young men to be sent forth to the British Colonies as catechists and ministers under the control of bishops, who draw their incomes from colonial sources, aided by the subscriptions of pious societies in this country. But all these institutions are voluntary, and a proposal to give a grant of public money in aid of the new college at Canterbury would not receive much countenance in the House of Commons.

If assistance from the public purse be refused to the Established Church for colonial purposes, could the Government ask for a grant for the training of a Roman Catholic priesthood for this same service? The grant, I think, could hardly be proposed; if it were, it would be violently resisted.

Another question on Graham's hands as Home Secretary was that of the Militia.

*To Sir Robert Peel*WHITEHALL, *August 16, 1845.*

The more I look into the Militia question, the more difficult I find it to be. Without a long delay and without a great expense this force cannot be made effective. Yet the permanent discontinuance of ballot would be the abandonment of the most powerful means of national defence. If it were only to reassert this ancient right granted to the Crown by Parliament, and to habituate

the present generation to this legal call on them for military service for the protection of our native shores, I believe it would be politic to incur the outlay, and to put the machinery again in motion.

A nation like this, divided from France by a narrow channel which steam can traverse in a few hours, ought never to be found without the means ready and in store of arming and equipping at least fifty thousand men. If a surprise took place, and these precautions had been neglected, the Government which is responsible would never be pardoned.

To Lord Stanley

WHITEHALL, *September 6, 1845.*

Sidney Herbert and I have been considering the Militia system together, and the means of internal defence in the event of sudden invasion, which Lord Cowley assures me is seriously contemplated in France as the measure which would instantly follow a declaration of war.

The King [of the French] is reported to have been unwell, and failing both in health and spirits. In the meantime Joinville [his son] visits our coasts, and narrowly inspects our landing-places.

No one has seen the enclosed Memorandum except Peel and Sidney Herbert. Before it proceeds further I wish you to read it. It touches on some important points more particularly belonging to your [War] department; but Militia and Home Defences are so connected with the Army that I could not take a comprehensive view of the whole subject without touching on your ground. I have written to the Duke a letter strictly confined to Militia. But Peel, I think, is disposed to agree with my suggestions, subject to Aberdeen's remonstrances,¹ and to your advice.

September 9.—Our course is steadily but quietly to improve our defences, and to augment our military means. In the present temper of France this is the mode to secure the continuance of peace.

In Ireland the policy of conciliating Catholics led not

¹ See *Peel Papers*, iii. 395-408.

unnaturally to alienation and aggravation of Orangemen, and their frequent outbursts of violent language and action drove Sir James Graham almost to despair of success in impartial government of the hostile factions.

On this Sir Robert Peel wrote :

August 26, 1845.—As to certain Orangemen having come armed to a meeting, I would not scrutinise the matter too closely, unless the facts be so brought under the notice of the Government that it is impossible to avoid investigation. If the practice continues, and the danger of collision be imminent, a proclamation will be a very proper course ; but I advise that we should, if we can with propriety, try the experiment of the subsidence of this Orange effervescence through its own intrinsic foolishness.

Sir James Graham took a slightly different view.

To Lord Heytesbury

August 27.—I have great horror of these armed processions. A serious collision will some day take place, and a spark may kindle a destructive fire. Accident may bring the two parties into collision. I have my doubts whether designedly the Repealers would wish to measure their strength with the Orangemen on anything like equal terms. But how disgusting and horrid is this mutual hatred among fellow-countrymen on account of differences in the Christian faith !

To Sir Robert Peel

September 30.—The case of Mr. — is a difficult one. In truth Lord De Grey and Sugden carried the dismissal of the Repeal magistrates to an inconvenient length. We were compelled to adopt and to defend their acts, and there is no retreat from what has been done. The comparison is now not unfairly drawn between our treatment of the justices who are avowed friends of Repeal and our lenity towards the sympathisers with the Orange delinquents.

October 2.—The state of affairs in Ireland distresses me. I see no cure for the evils which render the impartial government of that country almost impossible ; and, if every other difficulty were overcome, the concessions which alone would satisfy the Irish Catholics are such as Great Britain is not prepared to make. The Protestants of Ireland would resist them to the last extremity ; and, after all, the loyal attachment of the Irish Catholics under a Protestant British Sovereign and Protestant British Institutions would be found at best precarious.

Sir Robert Peel answered in a somewhat similar tone.

October 5.—My views of Ireland and its prospects have long been very gloomy. It is in a state which seems to preclude honest and impartial government. To conduct the Government on party principles ensures the support of one party at least ; to administer it on any other than party principles is to forfeit the confidence of both.

I am firmly persuaded that you have done whatever could be done to apply a remedy to a sad state of things. I have been a party to every proceeding which you have adopted, and have approved of every direction which you have given. I need hardly assure you of my cordial support.

Graham replies :

I have never doubted for a moment your kind support in every difficulty. It has never failed me, and happily the most cordial agreement in feelings and in opinions prevails between us.

Such was the attitude of Sir James Graham and of Peel towards Ireland just before the great famine.

As regards the Corn Law his latest utterances this year in debate were in accord with his opinion expressed privately to Sir Robert Peel in October, 1843 :

The defeat in the city election will go far to seal the fate of the Corn Law.

And again in December, 1843 :

It is a question of time.

In 1845 his first speech on the subject was in June, on the annual motion of Mr. Villiers for total and immediate repeal. Sir James then said :

I will not deny that in my opinion it is expedient by a gradual and cautious policy to bring our Corn Laws into nearer approximation to those wholesome principles which govern legislation with respect to other industrial departments. But it is my conviction that suddenly and at once to throw open the trade in corn would be inconsistent with the well-being of the community, and would give a shock to the agricultural interest such as would throw many other interests into a state of convulsion. The object of every Government, without distinction of party, for the last twenty years, has been to substitute protecting duties for prohibitory duties, and to reduce gradually protective duties. I approve of this as a safe principle. It is a keystone of the policy of Sir Robert Peel.

If you can show me that Free Trade with open ports would produce a more abundant supply to the labourer, you will make me a convert to the doctrine of free trade in corn.

And to this he added :

I place no value on the fixed duty lately proposed. It would be of no avail as protection. If you get rid of the present Corn Laws, you had better assent to a total repeal.

The second speech was in August, when Lord John Russell warned Ministers that in case of a bad harvest they would find their tariff reforms had been insufficient, and they must deal at last with the great question of corn. In reply Sir James remarked :

With a rapidly increasing population, the difficulty of

securing an adequate supply of food must inevitably increase. But under the amended scale the average price of wheat is under fifty shillings, and there is no reason to anticipate any considerable advance, unless a bad harvest be impending.

I retain my belief that an insignificant fixed duty would prove the most delusive of all schemes for equalising prices. And it is clear that the noble Lord himself does not think the House of Commons prepared for absolute and unqualified free trade ; for that is a proposal which he has never yet made, and which, I agree with him in thinking, it would be impossible under existing circumstances to persuade Parliament to adopt.

That a bad harvest was impending there was as yet no sign. But the care with which both Graham and Peel watched the weather shows that they felt how near at hand might be a crisis in the grave question of a nation's food. Sir James writes to Sir Robert :

August 15.—The sun at last is shining brilliantly, and the evening looks well. I know not that the state of affairs is exactly sound when Ministers are driven to study the barometer with so much anxiety.

But under no law will it be found easy to feed twenty-five millions crowded together in a narrow space, when Heaven denies the blessing of abundance.

The question always returns, What is the legislation which most aggravates or mitigates this dispensation of Providence ?

CHAPTER II

REPEAL OF THE CORN LAWS

1845-46

Responsibility of Graham—Failure of Potatoes—Fears of Famine—Foresight—Frequent Cabinets—Purchase of Corn—Graham's Instructions—Peel's Proposals—Reluctant Colleagues—Dissent of Stanley—Conservatives resign—Whigs fail to form a Government—Conservatives return to Office—Correspondence with Ireland—Relief Works—Treasury Interference—Overruled by Graham—Evictions—Murders—'Protection of Life' Bill—Disraeli—'Musing Hours of a Whitsun Recess'—'Blackguard Combination'—Graham's Speech on 'Sudden Conversion'—And on 'Coercion.'

THE general history of the Repeal of the Corn Laws is well known, but more may be told of the part played in it by Sir James Graham. Sir Robert Peel writes of him, 'His responsibility was equal to my own.' And again :

The members of the Government upon whom at this time the chief responsibility rested were the First Lord of the Treasury, the Secretary of State for the Home Department, and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

On October 13 the Lord Lieutenant addressed to the First Lord and to the Home Secretary the same alarming account of failure of the potato crop, and each Minister wrote to the other promptly—their letters crossing—in similar terms.

Sir Robert Peel to Sir James Graham

WHITEHALL, October 13, 1845.

There is such a tendency to exaggeration and inaccuracy in Irish reports that delay in acting upon them is always desirable. But I foresee the necessity that may be imposed upon us at an early period of considering whether there is not that well-grounded apprehension of scarcity that justifies and compels the adoption of every means of relief which the exercise of the prerogative or legislation might afford.

I have no confidence in such remedies as the prohibition of exports, or the stoppage of the distilleries. The removal of impediments to import is the only effectual remedy.

Sir James Graham to Sir R. Peel

NETHERBY, October 13.

It will be necessary after this warning that we should give our immediate thoughts and attention to measures which may mitigate this national calamity.

In Belgium and in Holland, if I mistake not, a similar evil has been met by opening the ports to all articles of first necessity for human food.

Indian corn might be obtained from the United States readily, and on cheap terms, if the people would eat it ; but if we opened the ports to maize duty-free, most popular and irresistible arguments present themselves why flour and oatmeal, the staple of the food of man, should not be restricted in its supply by artificial means, while Heaven has withheld from an entire people its accustomed sustenance.

Could we with propriety remit duties in November by Order in Council, when Parliament might so easily be called together ? Can these duties, once remitted by Act of Parliament, be ever again imposed ? Ought they to be maintained in their present stringency, if the people of Ireland be reduced to the last extremity for want of food ?

On receiving this Sir Robert Peel writes :

Interference with the due course of the laws respecting

the supply of food is so momentous and so lasting in its consequences, that we must not act without the most accurate information. I fear the worst.

And Sir James Graham replies :

The suspension of the existing Corn Law on the avowed admission that its maintenance aggravates the evil of scarcity, and that its remission is the surest mode of restoring plenty, would render its re-enactment or future operation quite impracticable. Yet, if the evil be as urgent as I fear it will be, to this suspension we shall be driven.

Cabinets met on October 31 and on November 1, at which 'it became evident that very serious differences of opinion existed as to the necessity for adopting any extraordinary measures, and as to the character of the measures which it might be advisable to adopt.'¹

On November 6, at a third Cabinet, Sir Robert Peel submitted definite proposals : (1) to issue an Order in Council opening the ports for admission of all kinds of grain for a time at a lowered rate of duty ; (2) to call Parliament together to sanction the Order ; and (3) to give notice of a Bill to be brought in after Christmas to modify the existing law, and admit at a nominal duty Indian and Colonial corn.

These proposals were supported by only three Ministers—Lord Aberdeen, Sir James Graham, and Sidney Herbert. The unwillingness of his other colleagues heartily to accept his policy almost drove Peel forthwith to resign.

He had received in writing from Lord Stanley well-considered arguments against proposals described by him as 'a Repeal of the Corn Laws.'

¹ Peel's *Memoirs*, ii. 148.

The memorandum was sent on to Graham, who writes to Peel :

I return this paper with a heavy heart. I am not convinced by the reasoning, but I am touched by the kindness and the truth of some expressions which it contains.

In sending the paper back to Stanley, Peel writes :

I have shown it to Graham, and I have not mentioned it to any other person whatever, nor will I do so.

This enclosure has not been found among Lord Derby's papers. The arguments used were probably much the same as those set forth later in his eloquent speeches in the House of Lords.

As yet this serious conflict of opinions was not fully reported to the Queen.

From Sir Robert Peel

Secret.

November 7, 1845.

When at Windsor I abstained from entering into details of personal opinions in reference to recent discussions in Cabinet.

I said you and I were agreed as to our general views. But I spoke rather of the urgency of the question generally than of any definite measures—that the Lords generally, with the exception of Aberdeen, were in favour of not acting decisively without more complete information, but were, I thought, prepared to act whenever the necessity for it should be more clearly established.

I said, being questioned, that the Duke was in favour of waiting for further information; gave a general opinion against immediate decisive action, but not peremptorily; was rather unwilling than otherwise to pronounce a very decided opinion, having imperfectly heard the discussion.

Some days later [writes Sir Robert Peel] I resolved, acting in concert with Sir James Graham and Mr. Goulburn, to take the unusual step of authorising a very large purchase of Indian corn in the United States on behalf of the Government.

On November 22 was dated the well-known Edinburgh letter in which Lord John Russell, without consulting his colleagues, declared it 'no longer worth while to contend for a fixed duty.'

'A fixed duty'—at first proposed by Radicals as against Huskisson's sliding scale, for which in 1828 Lord John voted—had since 1841 been formally adopted as the Whig policy for protecting corn. Lord John Russell, in February, 1841, had submitted to his colleagues a proposed sliding scale of his own, but they preferred protection by a fixed duty.

On November 25 instructions prepared by Graham for the Lord Lieutenant and for a Commission to be appointed in Ireland appear to have been unanimously approved. They cost him much labour. The draft is entirely in his handwriting. A copy is on record in the Home Office, and extracts in the *Peel Memoirs*.

On November 29 Graham saw Stanley with a view to removing his objections, but reports :

His judgment and wishes are opposed to the opening of the ports, and as to the future he sees no alternative but the maintenance or the abandonment of the principle of protection.

Stanley himself writes to Peel :

From what Graham told me, I am strongly inclined to think that the best thing for our own credit and for the country would be that we should agree to differ.

In the end, ' Lord Stanley and the Duke of Buccleuch each signified his inability to support a measure involving the ultimate repeal of the Corn Laws.'

On December 6 Sir Robert Peel resigned office, and on December 12 Sir James Graham, at the request of Lord John Russell, assures him of Peel's and his own readiness to support a measure for ' adjustment of the great question ' of the Corn Law.

Further correspondence follows.

To Sir Thomas Fremantle

December 18.—I wish I could terminate your suspense with regard to the proceedings of Lord John Russell. He has hit on a new expedient. Hitherto, when the head of a party has been sent for by the Sovereign to form an Administration, he at once has undertaken the commission or he has declined it. Lord John has occupied a week in making up his mind whether he will undertake the commission or not, and is still undecided. In the meantime he is sounding everybody, making his proposals, and arranging his plans, as if he were in possession of the royal authority.

What passed in these negotiations remained imperfectly known until the second Earl Grey placed certain facts and letters at the disposal of a contributor to *The English Historical Review*. Mr. J. R. Thursfield there writes : ¹

When Lord Grey first saw Lord John on Monday, December 15, the discussion turned chiefly on the nature of the measure affecting the Corn Laws. . . .

As a matter of history it is worth while to record that Lord John's original proposal was to open the ports at once for some months, in order to meet the immediate necessities of the country, and then to re-establish for a time some modified system of protection, such as the

¹ *English Historical Review*, i. 105. Quoted with permission.

imposition of a duty when corn should be under some given price, fifty shillings being the price mentioned.

Lord Grey at once protested against Lord John's proposal, which he regarded as utterly inadequate. Ellice, on the other hand, was prepared to accept it, and seemed to think it might even be acceptable to Cobden.

Next day Lord John informed Lord Grey that the proposal was abandoned, and Lord Grey wrote :

December 16.—I was, I confess, as much surprised as grieved to find that you were thinking of any half-measure.

Afterwards, when Lord Grey objected also to Palmerston as Foreign Minister, Lord John answered curtly :

December 21.—I think Lord Palmerston is the person in the United Kingdom best fitted for the Foreign Department. I am sorry you did not mention to me on Monday your insuperable objection to his holding the seals. In that case I should not have asked you to come to my house again.

A nearly similar version was sent to Sir Robert Peel by Lord Francis Egerton.

Lord John had all but decided on a gradual extinction of a fixed duty. He abandoned this on full discussion, but principally influenced by the earnest remonstrances of Earl Grey. . . . Lord Grey was warmly supported in his opposition by the Duke of Bedford. On this you may rely.

On December 20 Lord John had written to Graham :

Confidential.

CHESHAM PLACE, *December 20, 1845.*

I wish you would inform Sir Robert Peel that I am going to Windsor Castle immediately to inform the Queen that I have not been successful in forming an Administration.

And Graham had replied :

In obedience to your wish I shall hasten to inform Sir Robert Peel of the contents of your letter. My sincere wish has been that the public interest and safety should alone be consulted, and I look with anxiety to the effect of that decision.

Sir Robert Peel did not hesitate a moment.

To Lord Heytesbury

December 21.—Sir Robert Peel has undertaken the Government, and the Duke of Wellington in office cordially supports him, declaring that, in his opinion, ‘it is no longer a question of measures, but of Government itself.’

Recalled to office, Sir James Graham patiently resumed his burden of Irish and other State affairs.

From Sir Robert Peel

December 28.—I hope the Irish Government will be well prepared on a Prevention of Murder Bill, and on Lord Devon’s Commission Bill. The Speech from the Throne ought to advert to these.

To Sir Robert Peel

WINDSOR CASTLE, *December 31.*

The Irish potato case is now beginning to develop itself in its awful magnitude. The request to commence the purchase of seed potatoes on the public account throughout Europe and America is a warning not to be misunderstood.

I am not disheartened, and I will do all I can. But we have a nation to carry, as it were, in our arms, and no very great assistance on which we can rely.

To Sir Thomas Fremantle

January 3, 1846.—In present circumstances the Bills for encouraging public works are of more pressing necessity

than the Bill respecting the rights of tenants, which will, I am afraid, give rise to much contention. We must not, however, lose sight of that measure, which in justice is required for the protection of the occupiers.

My opinion remains unshaken that before August the want of food will be severely felt, and if proper and timely precautions are not taken in every district, seed potatoes in the spring will generally be scarce, and in some places deficient.

I have dwelt largely on this point in my instructions to the Commission. I can add nothing.

While thus engaged Sir James received a characteristic invitation from an old-fashioned votary of sport.

From Mr. F. Assheton Smith

TEDWORTH, January 4, 1846.

I wish 'your Pack' may run together as well as mine did on Friday last, thirty-five minutes as fast as a most beautiful Pack of Bitches could fly, and in tip-top condition, entirely over open, chiefly downs, and killed Him. I never saw before anything near it. I shall have the distance regularly measured by the County measurer, but I feel confident it will be near if not quite ten miles.

I wish you and Lady Graham could come just for a day, if it is possible. You would like, I am sure, to see the Hunting Establishment, and she would like to see the Gardens, and we should be indeed most delighted to receive you both. Cannot you contrive to slip away for a Day?

I should wish every Friend and Sportsman to see what I can show them at present, as I have eighty-six couples of Hounds, closely drafted, and a better Stable of Horses than I ever had before, *by far*; and my country well stocked with Foxes, although I have already killed this season 30½ brace, without having dug a single Fox, and spared a great many after killing one.

I say I should like you and all Friends to see it now, as, if these a—d Railroads, one-tenth of them at least, take Place—and one in particular, Winchester and Southampton—I must give them all up, and that amusement

which I have followed for sixty years—have hunted Hounds myself forty.

I wish to Heaven your H. of C. would empower Committees to award costs—as used to be the case in elections—‘frivolous and vexatious.’ Nothing could be more equitable, and the Country Gentleman would have some Chance.

The overworked Minister could not spare a day ; but later on he rejoiced to find that at least one country gentleman of the old school wished well to the proposed opening of the ports.

To Mr. Assheton Smith

I cannot resist the pleasure of telling you how much cordial gratification your message gave to me.

I have been deeply grieved with the anger and reproaches of a portion of the Conservative party, who accuse me of treachery, and who think that their interests have been sacrificed and betrayed.

All my feelings and prejudices are united to the land, and I am certain that in present circumstances the course which we have advised is the only one which is consistent with the permanent welfare and security of the landed gentry and aristocracy.

The approbation of a man occupying so high and independent a station in this class as you do is cheering and consolatory in the midst of the abuse which we are bound to encounter.

On the general tone in rural districts Mr. Greville writes :

January 9.—G. Harcourt tells me that in his county they are violent and unanimous. One neighbour—he says a sensible and well-informed man—has persuaded himself, and persuades others, that, if they can only throw out your measure, you will submit and carry on the Government, in deference to Parliament, on protective principles. I told him I thought this a dangerous delusion, and he said he thought so too.

Francis [Lord Francis Egerton] writes to me : ' I shall move the Address with the greatest satisfaction.' I knew he would.

Graham replies :

I am deeply impressed with a sense of the obligation which we owe to Lord Francis for consenting to move the Address in the present juncture. This is a good omen of success ; and I am not daunted in the least by the tone of defiance which has been lately adopted in some high quarters.

I hear that at Goodwood the language is, that the Duke of Richmond is ready to undertake the Government, and is surprised that the Queen did not send for him, when Lord John resigned his commission.

From Mr. Greville

January 15.—If you will be at the trouble of reading my pamphlet, you will see what my idea is of Peel's policy, and my opinion concerning it. Whether it is correct or not it must be for others to judge, but I have said what I believe to be the truth.

To Mr. Greville

January 17.—Allow me to have the pleasure of sending for your perusal the enclosed note from Sir Robert Peel, whose attention I had called especially to your pamphlet. His opinion is of much more value than mine, and his note expresses precisely what I felt and thought when I arose from reading your able disquisition on recent events.

From Sir Robert Peel

I read Greville's pamphlet with much greater satisfaction than if it had contained flattery at the expense of truth. I have seldom seen within the same number of pages so much truth told with so much ability.

Contrary to much well-meant remonstrance, Peel decided that the repeal of the Corn Law, though total, should be gradual.

From Mr. Charles Greville

COLONIAL OFFICE, *January 31, 1846.*

Charles Villiers has seen Cobden, who has received numerous letters from Manchester and elsewhere, all regretting the sliding scale, but highly approving of the measure generally; and he says that it is evident there will be a universal expression of opinion manifested in its favour—such a one, and so strong that, though Cobden feels himself compelled to vote for immediate repeal, after all his antecedents, there will be quite enough in the public manifestations to induce the Whigs, if they are so disposed, to accept the compromise.

The Irish correspondence goes on.

To Lord Heytesbury

January 6.—The fault of the Assassination Bill is that it requires a grievous crime to be committed in a district before its operation commences; it is therefore rather of a penal than of a preventive character.

But it is the notoriety of the crime which will reconcile the public mind to the temporary suspension of civil rights in the proclaimed district.

The misfortune is that this argument may be pushed to any length; and when once you begin in a free country to tamper with the freedom you know not where to stop until despotism is established. Yet no despotism is half so savage as this bloodthirsty reign of terror, which we seek to put down.

From Lord Heytesbury

January 22, 1846.—The difficulty in obtaining any voluntary contributions from the landed proprietors in those districts where distress prevails was equally experienced in former times of dearth. There are no doubt many honourable exceptions, but I fear we must consider the charge of unwillingness to come forward readily and liberally, brought against the landed proprietors as a body, to be substantially true.

That they should bear at least a portion of the burden that will be thrown upon the finances of the country by

the failure of the potato crop is very generally admitted ; but to every suggestion put forward having that object in view such objections are opposed, that even those best acquainted with the country are at a loss to advise in what manner it should be done.

To Lord Heytesbury

February 10.—I shall pass the Irish Bills through the House of Commons to-morrow. This has been no light work in the absence of both an Irish Secretary ¹ and a Law Officer.

Sir Robert Peel's speech the night before last was one of the best I have heard in Parliament, and cannot fail to produce an effect throughout the country.

To Lord Cowley

February 12.—Our situation here is unexampled. We have the Crown and the country with us. The two Houses of Parliament are adverse to us personally. They will nevertheless pass the commercial measures which we have proposed. The solution of the personal question will require a little time. The end is doubtful.

To Lord Palmerston

February 14.—No Irish Secretary ever had such a task of work imposed on him as it is my fate now to undergo. It reminds me of the nights in Stanhope Street, where I have left you hard at work hours after midnight.

To Right Hon. J. W. Croker

February 18.—I have no doubt whatever that before the next potato crop severe distress will be suffered in many districts in Ireland, and relief from the public purse must be given to a considerable extent.

That unhappy country has ruined many Administrations, and has been the stumbling-block that has caused the downfall of the greatest men. It has not lost its

¹ The new Secretary, Lord Lincoln, turned out of Newark by his father, the Duke of Newcastle, for supporting free trade in corn had not yet found a seat.

malignant influence, and will do its accustomed work again.

To Sir Thomas Fremantle

February 23.—In my position a little more or a little less of annoyance is not to be regarded. My fear is that public interests will be seriously endangered, if this state of parties and of affairs be prolonged.

To Lord Heytesbury

March 20.—Lord Crofton's letter from Roscommon exhibits a frightful picture, which the return of crimes committed both by night and day proves to be truthful. We cannot venture to propose more stringent enactments than the Life Protection Bill in its present shape. Anything beyond this must be martial law, and I am not prepared to announce the present necessity of such an extreme measure.

April 3.—The subject of the recent clearance in Roscommon, by the Gerrard family, of a large number of tenants, has excited much notice and sympathy here.

I have this morning read Mr. Gerrard's statement of the case. It establishes perhaps his legal right to the exercise of his extreme power as landlord, but at this juncture the adoption by a landlord of such extremities is fearfully injudicious, and pregnant with fatal consequences.

If the landlords of Ireland will neither learn prudence, nor exercise forbearance towards their tenantry, the strong arm of the law must be interposed, to put down crime and insurrection on the one hand, and to prevent oppression and reckless harshness on the other.

I have the greatest respect for the rights of property, and am earnest in my desire to uphold them, but British feelings are outraged by these sweeping ejectments, and the Imperial Parliament cannot be persuaded to maintain in their integrity powers which are so abused, while the land is exempted from all forced contributions for the relief and support of the destitute.

A Poor Law must before long be imposed, if tenants

are thus cast out by hundreds into the highways and hedges without shelter and without pity.

The Lord Lieutenant replies :

April 10.—The report of the magistrate sent down privately to procure authentic information respecting the evictions of Mr. Gerrard's tenantry at Ballinglas has been received. It confirms the greater part of the statements which have appeared, making allowance for exaggerations. It moreover shows that thirteen similar clearances have before taken place upon this property, and that others are still in contemplation—proceedings the cruelty and danger of which, it might have been supposed, would have awakened caution, if not some more generous feeling.

April 28.—I quite agree with you in thinking that the next season will probably be a more trying one than this, and that, if the landed proprietors do not make greater sacrifices than they seem inclined to do at present, some steps for compelling the unwilling to contribute to the support of the destitute must be adopted.

But extending the provisions of the Poor Law to outdoor relief is a measure fraught with so much danger that in my opinion it should only be had recourse to in the last extremity.

In April affectionate letters were exchanged between Sir James Graham and his old friend, now Governor-General of India.

To Sir Henry Hardinge

April 6, 1846.

You must allow me to congratulate you cordially on your brilliant success. In the field you have done everything that the Duke of Wellington himself could have achieved ; and in policy you have anticipated all our wishes, and have turned your victories to the best account. Your proclamation on entering the Punjab breathes a spirit of prudence and of moderation worthy of a British conqueror, and you have been enabled by Providence

to render signal service to your country, whose gratitude you deserve and will receive.

I have trembled for the safety of your life, and of your sons, but you have been mercifully preserved in the midst of manifold and great dangers, and you will, I trust, long be spared to enjoy your honours and your happy home.

I will not bother you with our affairs, which, though difficult enough, are dull and inanimate compared with the scenes in which you have been moving. I do not think that we shall survive the session; but, fall when we may, we have done the State some service, and your successes in India are alone sufficient to stamp our Administration with future fame. No friend rejoices more in your triumphs than I do; none will rejoice more to see you once again. With affectionate regard, I am always yours,

J. R. G. GRAHAM.

From Sir Henry Hardinge

SIMLA, May 26, 1846.

It is quite impossible for me to express the warm thanks I feel towards my old friends, who have so generously and liberally supported my measures and acts. I drew the sword as late as possible; I returned it into the scabbard as early as possible, and moderation was an essential part of my success, for I could not have annexed the country—that is, an Empire to an Empire—with fifteen thousand infantry.

Rely upon it, Ellenborough's calculations of my having forty thousand men, and of his intended arrangements about roads and forts and bridges, originate in some mistake. In our records there is not a paper on the Punjaub policy. Plans of a fort for Ferozpoor were drawn out in 1843, but they were to cost a large sum and require five years in the construction, and were abandoned by him.

It is a very great part of my good fortune that I should have acted under a Minister so generous as Peel, who for the last quarter of a century in all our relations has always given me more credit than I deserve.

At this time, on an appeal from Ireland, and with a strong conviction on his own part that the step was necessary, Graham—though the sternest of economists—used the supreme power of the Government to defeat sundry well-meant but in his judgment mischievous attempts of Treasury Clerks to restrict expenditure in Ireland.

To Lord Heytesbury

April 13.—I have written to Mr. Goulburn as strongly as I can, protesting against this interference of the Treasury with the progress of public works. It proceeds from an honest desire to check suspected jobs, and to keep down the advances of public money. I have no doubt that some impositions will be practised, and some private advantage will be wrung from this public calamity. But on the whole I am convinced that public works are the cheapest and best mode of meeting this great exigency, and if we select this mode we must give full effect to it, acting with promptitude and vigour, regardless of the minor evils which may flow from the selfishness and greedy disposition of individuals. After all, in this way one half of the advances of public money will be repaid, and I know not how a national calamity like this can be met on easier terms.

I am sure that it is the wish of Sir Robert Peel, as most certainly it is mine, that your arrangements in Ireland should not be thwarted or impeded by this undercurrent, which appears to be stronger than the force of any instructions that I can issue. The provoking thing is that those who thwart are not responsible, while those whose directions are set aside will be held accountable for any disaster which may ensue.

April 25.—You must not fear to exercise a large discretionary power. Relief must be administered, though the cost to the British public may be great.

You may operate without hesitation on your credit, and if it be exhausted it shall be renewed. And with respect to Works it is more prudent to grant assistance in doubtful cases than to institute long inquiries, which

may indefinitely postpone the relief, where most required, until it is too late. You may rely on my firm support in the exercise of this discretion.

It is a great emergency, which must be met by great exertions and prompt decision. You possess our entire confidence. What you on the spot consider necessary will receive our undoubting sanction.

If this sad state of affairs be prolonged beyond the current year, permanent enactments of a decisive character, charging the land of Ireland with the maintenance of the poor of Ireland, will become inevitable. In the meantime the British Government has undertaken the temporary charge, and it must faithfully and liberally fulfil its engagement.

April 27.—The accounts received from Ireland within the last two days confirm me in the opinion that, in administering relief on the public account, you must act promptly and decisively on your own judgment.

If you have doubts as to the accuracy of the statement of distress, let an investigation be made on the spot by some one sent especially for the purpose, in whom you confide; but, being satisfied of the necessity, at once administer the relief, either in money or in provisions. Sir R. Routh in these cases must obey your orders, without reference to the Treasury, and must report what he has done in accordance with your instructions, which will be a warrant to him.

We give to you the most ample credit and the largest powers. It is our wish that you should act on them boldly, for we are now convinced that this calamity cannot be adequately met in any other way. The case does not admit of the long delay of regular official correspondence. What we have undertaken to do must be done, and it can only be accomplished by the prompt exercise of supreme authority on the spot. You are invested with it, and, though the saving of needless expenditure is a duty, yet the rescue of a starving multitude from the last extremity of want is a paramount consideration.

Such was the singleness of purpose, the strength of will, the administrative vigour, with which Graham, and

with him Peel, brushed aside impediments, and devoted their best efforts to the task of saving Ireland from famine, at whatever cost to the United Kingdom.

It was about this time that Mr. Charles Villiers wrote, 'See how these two men do their business, and understand it.'¹ But the power was now to be placed in other hands.

During 'the musing hours of a Whitsun recess' their old follower, Mr. Disraeli, as he has himself recorded, thought out and imparted privately to Lord George Bentinck what he believed to be the one means to eject Sir Robert Peel from power. It might be done by a skilful combination of parties to defeat the Irish 'Life Preservation Bill.' Till now Protectionists and Whigs had favoured, and even clamoured for, such legislation. Lord George Bentinck had declared that 'the blood of murdered men must rest upon the head of any man who delayed the passing of this Bill one day.' Lord John Russell had been absent from the debates on it, but, according to Disraeli, had hitherto supported the measure. Yet early in June, at Lord John's house, it was decided to oppose the second reading. The Duke of Wellington wrote to Sir Robert Peel :

June 5.—I hear that the Protectionists and the Whigs have joined to throw out the Irish Assassination Bill, with the sole view of putting an end to your Administration. . . . If I was in your position, I would not allow this blackguard combination to break up the Government. I would prefer to dissolve the Parliament.

Sir James Graham's view of the situation is opened frankly to Lord Heytesbury.

¹ *Peel Papers*, iii. 352.

June 11. Private and Confidential.—The decision of a portion of the Protectionists to oppose the second reading of the Irish Life Preservation Bill renders the defeat of that measure certain, and the division in the Committee of the Lords on the Corn Bill very precarious.

Having been defeated in one House of Parliament, possibly in both, we must at once determine whether we shall resign or dissolve.

The inclination of my own judgment is in favour of resignation, but I shall act with Sir Robert Peel cordially, for he possesses my entire confidence.

We have got both divisions of our adversaries in a serious scrape. The Whigs, with the Corn Bill not secured, will suffer for their precipitation in defeating us; the Protectionists will never recover in public estimation the disgrace attached to the vindictive recklessness with which, in alliance with the Repealers, they have consented to leave Ireland exposed to bloodshed and anarchy.

We shall fall in our honest endeavour to secure the welfare of all parts of the United Kingdom.

June 20. Private and Confidential.—Recent events have indicated a strong disposition in many quarters to rally round the standard of Sir Robert Peel, and he is much stronger out of doors than in Parliament. But I expect to be in a minority on the Irish Bill, and, the Corn Bill being safe, there are many very painful reasons why we ought to hesitate before advising the Crown to dissolve.

We shall be driven, if we take this step, into unnatural alliances and combinations which will go far to perpetuate the present dangerous position of parties, and which will make the future formation of a strong Government on sound Conservative principles more difficult, if not impossible.

On the whole, therefore, I incline to the belief that we shall be beaten in the Commons before the end of next week, and that it will be prudent for us to retire, the Corn Bill having received the Royal Assent.

I hear that the Free Traders are disposed to meet an adverse vote on the Irish Bill by a vote of confidence in our general policy. But sugar stands most awkwardly

in our way,¹ and I should be sorry to owe our prolonged existence as the Ministers of the Queen to the interference of the Anti-Corn-Law League, whose commercial policy is sound, but whose general political principles and objects are full of danger.

In short, our mission for good is nearly closed. I could have wished to have settled the Oregon question, and it is still on the cards that we may do this good service before we retire.

I write thus in strict confidence to you, from whom I have never withheld anything. I have only stated to you my own opinions, and they may serve to prepare you for coming events.

The events came speedily. Next day Sir Robert Peel wrote to the Duke of Wellington :

I am decidedly against dissolution on an Irish question, above all, on such a question as the Coercion Bill.

Shall we dissolve on some other ground ? . . . On what ground shall we appeal to the country ? We must appeal to it on some principle. The natural one seems to be 'Free Trade and the destruction of Protection.' If we are to succeed, we shall succeed by an unnatural combination with those who agree with us in nothing but the principles of Free Trade. A short time only would pass before this combination would be dissolved, and we should be at the mercy of our new allies.

In reply the Duke of Wellington wrote advising a dissolution on grounds of confidence in Peel.

The question for the country will be, in reality, whether you are to continue the Minister, or the Queen is to look for other servants !

Considering your services to the public, your restoration of the revenue and finances of the country, your regulation of the banking trade, your restoration of the manufacturing prosperity of the country, and your final

¹ Radical free-traders were bent on placing slave-grown sugar on the same footing as sugar the product of free labour.

settlement of the Corn Laws, there is no friend of yours who can hesitate in letting this question go to the public.

The question at the elections will be the support of your Administration. Many will oppose it whose support I wish you had. But I am very much mistaken if you should not be supported by a majority of the thinking men of the country.

I confess, however, that if it were necessary I should feel no objection to go to the country on the simple question of the Irish Assassination Act.

The Whigs in December, 1845, were to have had a Coercion Act. They voted in the House of Lords in January, 1846, for this very Assassination Bill, which is now opposed with party views.

The people of England must sooner or later be made acquainted with the state of things in Ireland, and must provide means for the protection of the lives and properties of those living on the same soil.

Sir Robert Peel replied :

Many political events are imperfectly known to the great mass of people in this country, but there is one fact that is perfectly notorious—for it is in the mouth of every one—that there are many districts in Ireland in which no man's life is safe, except indeed the life of the assassin.

These facts being notorious, what has the Executive Government done? It has asked to have the same measures of protection and precaution which other Governments have had, which were in force from 1835 to 1840, and with which the Whig Government would not part.

If we are refused these, shall we remain responsible for the government of Ireland?

I feel that we have done what it was our duty to do.

Had her Majesty's Government failed [said Sir Robert Peel afterwards, in his last speech on retiring] in carrying, in all their integrity, the main measures of commercial policy which it was my duty to recommend, there is no exertion that I would not have made, no sacrifice that I would not have incurred, in order to ensure the ultimate

success of those measures, or at any rate to give the country an opportunity of pronouncing its opinion. For such a purpose I should have felt justified in advising Dissolution. . . . But there has been fortunately no necessity for a dissolution of Parliament upon that ground. Those who dissented most strongly from our commercial policy withdrew all factious and unseemly opposition, and, protesting against our measures, they have finally allowed them to pass.

But it was not so for Ireland. Peel continues :

We brought forward the measure, against which the House has decided, not under the belief that resistance to the contagious spread of crime and a vigorous repression by law of offences disgracing some parts of the country were in themselves calculated permanently to improve the social condition of Ireland, but we thought that the restoration and maintenance of order were necessary preliminaries to the success of ulterior legislation for the improvement of the condition of the people.

The House, however, has decided otherwise, and I am not about to arraign that decision.

Such language from the retiring Minister expressed the policy and feelings of Sir James Graham as truly as his own. But on one point Sir James was challenged to answer for himself and Peel. Lord John Russell expressed his regret that the men who in 1841 had driven him and his colleagues from power for proposing an eight-shilling duty, now that they were compelled to go so much further themselves, had not the grace to admit how much they had been in the wrong. This taunt, under the circumstances, Graham thought ungenerous, and for his leader, his party, and himself, declining to apologise, he rendered blow for blow.

When the noble lord says that [in 1841] I and those with whom I act overthrew a Government whose princi-

ples and measures we subsequently adopted, he must permit me to remind him that he overthrew the Government of Sir Robert Peel, in 1835, by carrying a resolution in reference to the appropriation of the property of the Church of Ireland, or a certain portion of it, to secular purposes; that he proposed, when in office, for some time to act on the principle of that resolution, and that at last he abandoned it, in a manner which I will not characterise, because more severe expressions were applied to that abandonment, by some who are now followers of the noble lord, than I should care to employ.

Then, as to free trade in corn, though those with whom I act have changed their views, yet the noble lord and those with whom he acts were as sudden converts.

The acts of a Government must be taken in connection with the declarations of its chief. With regard to free importation of corn, what were the declarations of Lord Melbourne? Did he not, up to the very last year of his Administration, contend that any change whatever was objectionable, and that the notion of introducing free trade of corn into this country was to be regarded as insanity?

It was not till Lord Melbourne's Government was on the eve of dissolution, when power had departed from it, that the principle of free trade was enunciated by them as the principle of their Government.¹

And there is this difference between our conduct and theirs. We, in changing our views, have given effect to a principle which we believe to be indispensably necessary to the welfare of the community, by the sacrifice of our personal interests and feelings, and of power. The noble lord and his colleagues changed not less suddenly than we did; but by their change they sought, as I contend, the maintenance of their Administration, and the discomfiture of their political adversaries.

Under such circumstances, any retraction of opinion is quite impossible, though the particular form of expressions which I may [in 1841] have used in debate might not have been justifiable.

¹ Always excepting corn.

As regards Coercion the case was even stronger against the Whigs as a party.

There can be no question that the measure introduced by Lord Grey in 1834 was infinitely more stringent than that which we are now debating. That, which was doubtless an unconstitutional measure, was proposed from a deep conviction of its necessity.

Lord Holland concurred in the Act of 1833, by which trial by court-martial was substituted for trial by jury ; so did Lord Althorp, so did Lord Brougham.

Sir Robert Peel, when he conducted the affairs of Ireland in 1835, governed without a measure of this description.

Lord Melbourne proposed a measure less stringent than that of 1833, but more stringent than the present Bill. The variations have been pointed out.

On the present Bill, I myself heard Lord Lansdowne say that the necessity for it was fully established, and give his unqualified support to the second reading. Lord Melbourne expressed the strongest opinion that the measure had been too long delayed, and ought to be immediately pressed forward.

Yet now we are told by gentlemen opposite that this is an unconstitutional Bill, and that its authors are undeserving of the confidence of Parliament.

Notwithstanding many difficulties, we have for five years conducted the government of Ireland without asking Parliament to grant us any extraordinary powers.

Charged with the maintenance of peace in that country under the most adverse circumstances, and knowing that our power would be shaken to its foundation by our commercial policy, we have not shrunk from the responsibility of proposing this measure. To have done so lightly would have been inexcusable. Having proposed it from a conviction of its necessity, to shrink now would be ignominious and base. Be the consequences therefore what they may, we are determined not to deviate from the course we have deliberately decided on.

Ministers therefore went to a division, and were defeated, by seventy-three votes. The majority included

Protectionists and Whigs, Irish Repealers and Radical Free Traders ; Disraeli and Lord John Russell, O'Connell and Cobden. Sir James Graham remarks to Lord Heytesbury on this final issue of their joint exertions :

June 30.—We have laboured honestly and cordially together in very difficult circumstances to promote the welfare of Ireland. We may have committed some mistakes. I hope that our successors may be so fortunate as to avoid them. I do not believe that their conduct will be guided by purer motives.

On the same day the Lord Lieutenant sends extracts from O'Connell's latest letter read publicly at the Conciliation Hall.

For my part, I am most thoroughly convinced that it is utterly impossible for the British Parliament to govern Ireland properly. It requires a domestic Legislature for the purpose.

No man can tell how near we may be to the accomplishment of our best wishes, and in truth to *our only hope, the Repeal of the Union.*

CHAPTER III

1846-48

Peel and Graham remain allied—Their powers of endurance compared—Thanks from Scotland—And from Catholics—Graham declines Governor Generalship of India—Lord Dalhousie—Conservative Overtures—Lord Carlisle—Cornwall Lewis on Cobden—On Cicero—On Representative Government of an Empire—Louis Philippe.

FOR the next four years—from June 29, 1846, when Sir Robert Peel left office, to June 29, 1850, when the accident occurred that caused his death—no political friend was closer or truer to him than Graham.

Together they had borne the heavy strain of carrying repeal of the Corn Law against the majority of their own party, and without help from two of their ablest speakers ; Stanley having gone against them, and Gladstone having lost his seat for Newark and failed to find another. Together they had suffered from the vengeful wrath of landowners, with fierce abuse beyond all recent example. Together they now made it their chief business in Parliament to defeat all efforts to re-impose taxation upon daily bread.

Of the letters that passed between them some published with the Peel papers must not be omitted here. Others will be new to readers. Sir Robert Peel wrote :

July 3, 1846.

I do heartily rejoice that we have concluded with

honour a successful career as well as a desperate conflict. I could not have sustained it much longer, and had many warnings of this, which I was determined to disregard, while there was a chance of failure in that which had become the chief and indeed the sole object of our ambition. Few know what I have been suffering from noises and pain in the head.

With what pleasure shall we talk over the stirring events of the last five years ! Your cordial support and entire and unreserved confidence have been my chief stay ; and I look forward with the utmost satisfaction to the continuance out of office of an intimacy and cordial friendship which began before the ties of official relations and a common responsibility united us.

And Sir James Graham replied :

I need not assure you of the warmth or sincerity of my attachment, or of my fixed intention to act in strict union with you. My friendship and my sense of public duty have led me cordially to co-operate with you for the last ten years in every vicissitude of fortune. I do not remember one serious difference of opinion between us in this long and trying period. I am too old to make new alliances. I shall remember our past union with pride, and I hope that till the close of our lives we shall never be divided.

Of the stress of official toil that had fallen on them a just appreciation came from Sir John Hobhouse :

August 6.—I hope you will very soon recover your health in the country. It is wonderful that you have stood all your labours so well. The Speaker, Labouchere, and myself were making a comparative estimate of the powers of endurance of our leading members of Parliament. We placed you, Sir Robert Peel, and Lord John Russell very far above all competition ; and Labouchere was for putting you above the other two, more especially as your office gave you more labour than both put together.

Graham's work in Scotland was acknowledged in grateful terms by the highest judicial authority there, Lord Justice Clerk Hope.

August 31.—Independently of the deep regret that an Administration so successful should be overturned at the very time they had effected so great a measure, I must feel, in common with a very large body of persons in this country, most unfeigned and lasting regret at *your* retirement from the Home Office.

To Scotland the Administration of the Home Office is really the Ministry, being the only part of it with which Scottish interests are connected. This is the more keenly felt as on the side of the party now in office there is no one connected with Scotland at all qualified to inspire confidence. All are so connected with the narrow party feelings of the original Edinburgh Whigs that we cannot look to any course but that which gave such disgust from 1835 to 1841.

The prosperity and usefulness of the Church of Scotland now wholly depends on the manner in which the Crown patronage is exercised. Other ten, even other five, years of the system followed by you with such eminent success, and causing such satisfaction, would, I am confident, have quite restored us from the evils of Secession, and secured to us the rising generation. The knowledge of the good you have done as to the Church must be a source of the greatest gratification to you.

I do not know what views Sir George Grey may bring to the subjects connected with the administration of justice. I feel very keenly the change at the Home Office as to the anxious duty that I have to discharge. Having been reporting to one so peculiarly conversant with the whole subject, and for whom I had so great a regard, it is difficult to continue to a stranger the same full reports on matters of such delicacy. But that very feeling only makes me more anxious if possible to render him all the aids in my power.

A Scottish member who had striven in vain to convert the Home Secretary to his views of the Church question

thus recognises his purity of motive and integrity of purpose.

From Mr. J. C. Colquhoun, M.P.

I shall, even when I differ, as I fear we shall often do, admire and appreciate the sincerity of your convictions. It is one of the privileges of a regard true and warm, as I am sure you will believe mine for you to be, that it overlooks the differences of opinion, to find a cordiality of sentiment ; and though we have not *idem judicium* in public matters, yet we shall cherish the belief that there is in both of us the *idem velle*, *idem sentire de republica*—the fervent wish for the lasting good of our country and its institutions after our little time has passed away.

The correspondence with Peel goes on :

To Sir Robert Peel

August 31.—Since we parted several things have happened which I sincerely regret. But all are as dust in the balance compared with the permanent good which the public will enjoy from the settlement of the Corn and Sugar questions on sound principles, the first fruit of which is the important relaxation of the hostile tariffs of the United States.

From Sir Robert Peel

September 2.—I am firmly convinced that the permanent adjustment of the Corn Laws has rescued the country and the whole frame of society from the hazard of very serious convulsion.

Suppose we had taken suspension for six months. Can any man in his senses believe that in the present state of the potato crop the suspension could have been allowed to expire on the first of August last ; or that, after that which would have been inevitable—a second suspension—the Corn Law of 1842 could have survived failure on the two first occasions on which it was put to the test ?

It would have gone by the board, wrenched out of the hand of Parliament, possibly after the excitement of indignant feelings which the lapse of years would not have

assuaged. No interval of grace, no modified scale, no voluntary concession.

And, with these things staring them in the face at least, if not penetrating their reason and conviction, there are people talking of reviving the law, and re-establishing the former measure of protection !

To Sir Robert Peel

NETHERBY, *September 4, 1846.*

The farmers in this neighbourhood will not venture again to plant potatoes on a large scale, and the poor are gladly resorting to the use of Indian meal and of bread compounded of Indian meal and American flour, which is cheap and nutritious.

I consider it the most fortunate event of my life to have been enabled in any degree, however slight, to contribute to the attainment of this national good, which compensates for a severe dispensation of Providence. And you will think of this and be comforted when friends forsake you, when enemies assail you, and when the tinsel of the vanities of public life becomes tarnished in your estimation.

December 1.—Have you seen the official account of imports to October 10 ? The large import of provisions either duty-free or at a low duty alone has prevented a general scarcity ; in most adverse circumstances the revenue has been sustained ; and manufacturing industry, though checked, has not suffered in the extreme.

In short, your policy has triumphed, and a national calamity has been averted.

From Sir Robert Peel

December 16.—Whenever one reads a very alarming report from Ireland, there is always a consolatory confidence that it is grossly exaggerated ; but, if one-half of what is said with regard to the neglect of ordinary agricultural operations be true, the prospects for next year are little less gloomy than the certainties of the present.

It is too well known how such grave apprehensions were justified by the appalling famine of 1847.

When a new session approached, the Duke of Buccleuch, as a supporter of Sir Robert Peel, inquired as to his arrangements for it. Sir James Graham replied :

Sir Robert Peel will be in his place in the House of Commons on the first day ; but no note in his name will be issued to his friends. Lord Lincoln, Lord Dalhousie, and Mr. Cardwell are active in their exertions to keep Sir Robert Peel's supporters together ; and the dangerous state of Ireland, and the difficulties which have arisen in our foreign relations, would seem to forebode an approaching crisis, in which for the public good it may be necessary to rally round the ablest and most experienced leader.

Sir Robert Peel himself gave no encouragement to such efforts to keep the party together.

DRAYTON MANOR, *January 9, 1847.*

My advice was against the transmission of the letter from Young. I pointed out the difficulty of determining to whom such a letter should be addressed, the probability of the question from some—' By whom is it authorised ? and what is intended ? '

I stated, however, that, while I decidedly objected to the use of my name, I did not wish to control others who might be more eager, and less disgusted than myself with the return for an honest attempt to save a party, including the great landed aristocracy, from the shame and odium which the counsels of the majority would have brought upon them ; and, what was of more consequence, to save a people from some at least of the evils of famine.

As regards a seat offered to him Graham writes :

To Lord Londonderry

February 10, 1847.

It is true that at this moment I have no certain prospect of obtaining a seat in the next Parliament. I shall not sit for Dorchester again, and I have not as yet used any

precaution to secure for myself a return in any other place.

I am a warm supporter of Sir Robert Peel, and I act in strict concert with him. But in the existing state of parties it is impossible to foresee the new combinations which may arise, or the course which it may be necessary to take with prompt decision. I hope and believe that you and I shall generally agree, yet it is better that I should reserve to myself perfect freedom of future action, unfettered by any such obligation as the tenure of the seat for Durham under your auspices would imply. I beg therefore to decline your generous offer, and to repeat my cordial thanks.

Some months later Sir Robert Peel comments on the dispersal of his late supporters.

April 3, 1847.

I think Goulburn greatly underrates the difficulty of cordially reuniting the Conservative party. I very much doubt whether the elements of disunion did not exist in a formidable degree long before the month of October, 1845.

In that and the following month I wrote several letters to you of which I kept no copies. If they are at Netherby, will you have the goodness to bring them to London, and let me have them for a few days. I want them for no other purpose than to complete my correspondence, which with you was most unreserved, and contains the most authentic record of that eventful period, of our motives and our actions.

I have been reading your letters to me, and they have revived my indignation at the treatment which we received.

With the Whigs Graham's relations were amicable. The new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Clarendon, writes :

May 21, 1847.

Lewis has informed me of his conversation with you, and I cannot resist telling you how much it has comforted and encouraged me in the difficult task I have

undertaken, not from presumptuous folly or ambition, but solely from a sense of duty.

I gratefully accept your kind offer to give me the benefit of your advice and experience, and with your permission I shall call upon you when I return from Ireland.

Several letters of this date are of personal interest. To Sir James Graham's steady support of the Poor Law when it was unpopular, and when others were disloyal to it, Mr. Cornewall Lewis bears grateful witness.

May 24, 1847.

I had good reason to know of your consistent adherence to the present Poor Law under the most adverse circumstances, and I have had equal reasons for being convinced of your friendship to myself, but I was not at all prepared to expect that you would have expressed yourself with respect to me as you did on Friday night; and I hope you will feel assured of my sincere gratitude for what you said, which was doubly valuable at a moment when so many combined to attack me, and I was unable to say a word for myself.

Sir Edmund Head also, Poor Law Commissioner for six years, in announcing his appointment as Governor of New Brunswick, writes :

Wherever I go, and whatever duties I may perform, I shall never forget either the confidence which you were pleased to repose in me or the kindness with which you exerted yourself in my favour whenever there was a chance of my suffering from the change in the administration of the Poor Law.

Mr. Henry Manners Sutton, Under Secretary of State, afterwards Lord Canterbury, records what he owed to Sir James Graham for political training.

I find every day the advantage of the apprenticeship

I served under you at the Home Office. I honestly believe that no man, totally devoid of experience or knowledge of public business as I was in 1841, ever had such opportunities of acquiring information thrown in his way as you were kind enough to afford to me.

While gladly supporting a grant proposed by Lord John Russell in aid of all schools where the Bible was read, Sir James protested against the exclusion of Roman Catholics merely because they did not use the Protestant authorised version. He reminded the House that these were not only fellow-Christians, but the majority of Christians, and the version in use by them was the Bible from which Bossuet and Fenelon preached, and Pascal derived his immortal *Thoughts*. Was their refusal to discard this to shut them out from any share in State aid? For his stand on this point he received thanks from an old friend, the Hon. Charles Langdale.

April 24.—I cannot but congratulate you, as I would willingly Sir Robert Peel, on the manly and generous course you have adopted toward us Catholics, which stands so prominently forward in bold contrast to that truculent policy which in my opinion has stamped with disgrace Her Majesty's Government.

As the time drew near for the General Election, the sitting member for East Cumberland, Mr. James, made known confidentially to Sir James Graham his intention to give up his seat, and expressed regret if in the contest of 1837 he had said anything calculated to break off friendly relations. Sir James replied in the same spirit, thanking him for the proof of goodwill, but adhered to his resolution not again to solicit the honour of representing Cumberland.

Soon afterwards Earl de Grey offered to use his influence

at Ripon in Sir James's favour. This he accepted gratefully, but expressly reserved full freedom of action.

I should be unwilling [he wrote] to occupy the seat except on the understanding that I am at liberty henceforth to pursue the course that my own deliberate judgment may dictate.

In his address to the electors, Sir James said :

My service in the House of Commons extends over a long period of eventful years, and without arrogance I may perhaps assume that my public conduct is not unknown to you.

I am conscious that on many occasions I may have erred in judgment, but it has been my constant and honest endeavour to strengthen and to uphold the institutions of this country by the application of timely remedies to their defects; and without regard to my personal interests I have laboured to promote the happiness and welfare of all classes of my fellow-citizens.

I can only promise to adhere to the independent course which I have hitherto pursued, and you may rest assured that no party considerations shall prevail over my sense of public duty.

When I remember that my father had the honour of representing Ripon in several Parliaments, I hope that I shall not be considered by you as a stranger.

Had Sir James Graham at this time cared to exchange his position for one of greater responsibility, he had again a flattering opportunity to do so.

Lord John Russell to Right Hon. E. Ellice

CHESHAM PLACE, June 16, 1847.

After reflection, and communication with Lord Lansdowne and the Duke of Wellington, I have arrived at the conviction that there is no person to whom the destinies of India can be so safely confided as to Sir James Graham.

The finances and financial system of India require the

most vigilant application of sound principles, combined with caution. The Army and the position of our Empire are eminently safe for the present, but much remains to be done to guard against fresh and growing danger.

It is necessary that a Governor-General of India should have the entire confidence of the Government at home, and that Sir James Graham should have. Let him not imagine that bygone disputes in the House of Commons would ever be remembered by me ; indeed, if they were, they would be outweighed and cancelled by the recollection of our old partnership under Earl Grey, and his present handsome conduct towards the Administration of which I am the head.

Whether such a post, high and important as it is, would suit his domestic arrangements, I cannot tell. My duty is to offer my influence with a view to obtain the best man for the government of India, and Sir James Graham is that man.

Two days before the date of this letter Greville records a long conversation on the subject.

June 14.—Graham said he had three times refused to go to India. It would always be a matter of much deliberation, both on private and public grounds, whether he should accept it if offered ; at present it was out of the question, for Lord John Russell was evidently animated by very implacable sentiments towards him, and he never would take an office from him when it would clearly be offered at the suggestion of others, and not of his own free will.

He then talked a great deal about the resentment of the Whigs towards him, of the way in which he had been persecuted by them. . . . how hurt he had been at the bitterness of Lord John's attack upon him in reply to his speech objecting to the exclusion of Catholics from the Education Grant, etc.

In reply Greville assured Graham that, though Lord John might not have feelings of extreme cordiality towards him, yet he rendered ample justice to his public

character and capacity, and felt no bitterness. And, this conversation being reported by Greville to the Duke of Bedford, 'Lord John wrote to Graham a very kind and handsome letter'—apparently the letter addressed to Ellice. Thereupon—the Duke of Bedford told Greville—

June 20.—Graham asked leave to consult Peel, who entreated him to decline, and said that their support to the Government would be considered to have been given in reference to this appointment. Graham did decline the offer, of course with many expressions of gratification. Lord John, however, would not accept the refusal as final, and caused Graham to be informed that he should not appoint any one else, but wait and see what might occur. So the matter stands at present. It is a profound secret, and Graham has not even told his wife. No wonder he was so reserved with me.

Declined by Graham, the Viceroyalty was accepted by his friend Lord Dalhousie, who wrote to Graham :

August 10, 1847.

Many kind letters have come to me conveying friendly congratulations on my appointment to India ; but no one among them has given me more pleasure than yours. Your good opinion gratifies me, and your approval of my accepting the office is doubly welcome, because I am very sure you would not have expressed it unless you had cordially felt it.

My first impression was to decline the offer. Full assurances however were frankly and promptly given that my acceptance would leave me entirely free in politics at home, and would be fully understood not to imply any separation from the party with which I have acted, or any adherence, now or hereafter, to the Whigs. When this had been said, I felt that no man who had served the Crown could rightly refuse his services to it, if he could give them without the risk of damaging his public character ; and as the Duke of Wellington strongly urged me to consent, I consented.

It is a noble field, and yet I would have preferred to remain at home. There is a 'rocking of the battlements' here, and I should have liked well to help to man them.

As a high authority on the recently amended Poor Law, Sir James was consulted at this time on an offer to be made to Cobden, and replied :

To Mr. Lewis

October 13.—If Cobden could be induced to accept the office of Poor Law Commissioner, the Government would obtain a great advantage. They would yoke him at once to their Administration ; they would have the benefit of his wisdom and active co-operation on all economical questions ; the prestige of his name would be immediate strength ; and the chances are great that his powerful understanding and address would enable him to grapple successfully with the difficulties both of administering and of amending the Poor Law. His elevation to office and to power would cast a halo of popularity around the functions to be performed by him which would be useful.

These are some of the reflections which occur to me as first impressions on considering the suggestion of Cobden's name, which is entirely new to me. He would not accept the office unless he were raised to the Privy Council. Would he not ask for Cabinet ?

Mr. Lewis gives a lively account of some minor doings in the short session of the new Parliament before Christmas.

I think you did not miss anything of much importance during the last week of the late *proludium* to the session.

There was a debate on New Zealand, which chiefly turned on a protest of Selwyn, the Puseyite bishop—a most improper and outrageous proceeding, as it seemed to me. However, he was well defended by his own theological party—among others by Roundell Palmer,¹ who spoke ably and fluently and with perfect self-possession,

¹ Afterwards Lord Chancellor and Earl of Selborne.

but with a somewhat tabernacular whine, and in a manner that savoured a little of fanaticism. I should not have guessed him to be a Chancery barrister by his style of speaking.

The first day's debate on the Jew Bill was tolerably interesting. Lord John's was a good constitutional speech, avoiding all irritating topics. Gladstone, I believe, spoke very well,¹ but I did not hear him. Disraeli uttered a long, laboured discourse, full of pointless paradox, and attempts at enigmas, of which the solution never came. It was evidently distasteful to the House.

The second night was very tedious. George Bentinck was particularly dull. He was repeatedly interrupted, and it was with great difficulty he was able to finish his speech.

The minority was numerous, considering that all the leaders voted in favour of the motion.

The Poor Law change has at last been consummated, exactly in the form, as it seems to me, in which it occurred to you in July, 1846. Although the gestation has been tardy, the result is on the whole pretty satisfactory.

I heard an anecdote of Gladstone, that the chairman of his election committee asked him to dinner. He did not refuse, but begged him to consider that the day named was the *Vigil of St. Simon and St. Jude*.

Throughout 1847 much speculation went on as to the intentions of Peel. Sir James Graham, who had better means of knowing them than any one else, is reported by Greville as having stated the case thus :

Peel's position is a very extraordinary one, and he is determined to enjoy it. He has an immense fortune, is in full possession of his faculties and vigour, has great influence and consideration in Parliament and in the country ; he has shown the world that he is *capax imperii*. In this position he will not retire from public life to please any man ; he does not want to be the head of a party, still less to return to office, but he will continue to

¹ ' After much consideration ' (Morley's *Life*, i. 376), Mr. Gladstone, now first representing his University, voted for the Jews.

take that part in public affairs which he considers best for the public service, reserving to himself the faculty of acting according to circumstances in any political contingency. I forget [says Greville] the exact phraseology Graham used, but what he conveyed was that Peel had made no positive resolution never to enter into the public service again, and that circumstances might induce him to do so, but that he neither desired nor expected anything of the kind, nor would do anything to bring it about.¹

1848

The year of European revolutions began in England calmly. Sir Robert Peel writes :

January 1.—Is your private official correspondence in London or at Netherby ? There are many blanks in my correspondence with you—the most harmonious perhaps that ever was conducted between Ministers standing in the relation in which we stood. I should like to have some of my letters for the purpose of taking copies of them.

January 2.—The universal talk after the Jew Bill debate was that Mr. Disraeli's speech had given the greatest offence, and that Lord George Bentinck was formally deposed.

I never trust universal talk. The strongest proof of the virtual deposition of Lord George was the disinclination of all sides of the House to listen to him.

I hope to see Inglis in his proper place as the leader of a real old Tory, Church of England, Protectionist, Protestant party ; and Lord Stanley acting in concert with him.

Throughout the year Graham and Peel steadily pursued one policy. Their object was not place, nor power. They laboured to secure good government in troublous times. Especially they remained always on guard against

¹ *Greville Memoirs*, June 20, 1847.

any attempt to undo their great reform of 1846 and resuscitate a tax on corn.

Meanwhile Protectionists were dissatisfied with their leaders, and anxious to get saner guidance. One such effort Peel describes.

January 12.—Goulburn told me yesterday that when at Cambridge he was waited on by a Protectionist member who, speaking from authority, informed him that Lord George Bentinck and Mr. Disraeli were deposed, and invited him to accept the lead of the Protectionist party.

Goulburn replied that he doubted whether the Protectionists could depose their present leaders; that the acceptance of the lead by him would create a schism among them; he thought it highly desirable to effect a reunion of the different sections of the old Conservative party; but such reunion, to be satisfactory and permanent, must be the result of general harmony patent to the world by a concurrent course of action on such questions as might come under the consideration of Parliament; and in his opinion the attempt at reunion by preconcerted arrangement would be premature.

The person with whom he conferred said that he was rejoiced to hear that Goulburn was in favour of the abstract principle of reunion.

Graham replied to Peel :

January 15.—I have no faith whatever in the possibility of reuniting under any circumstances the party which you led in 1841.

Implicit reliance on your superior judgment, honesty, and prudence was the keystone of that great combination. The different shades of opinion in that party were very numerous, but the whole was blended in the confidence which you inspired, and in the general conviction that you were the man most fit to govern. That confidence is now abjured, and without it the party is dissolved into its first elements, which are most discordant.

Time will probably solve the difficulty, and will restore

order to chaos, by fresh combinations, not by the revival of past agreements, never more to be renewed.

In June, when the Whigs were in danger of being beaten and having to resign on their Sugar Bill—from which they were saved only by the strong support of Peel and Graham, while Herbert and Gladstone and Lincoln voted against them—Greville wrote to Graham :

I think Lord John will probably consult Peel before he gives the Queen any advice at all. Meanwhile Melbourne has written to her, and advised her to send for Peel.

In reply Graham, in conversation, ‘discoursed largely on the impossibility of Peel’s coming into office.’

Later in the year Graham reports an overture made to himself.

To Sir Robert Peel

September 25.—Lord Londonderry sounded me to ascertain if I would consent to the reorganisation of the Conservative party in the House of Commons, and undertake a prominent part in leading it.

I at once declined. I said that with the High Tory and Protectionist party my differences on principle were irreconcilable ; and that concord with Lord George Bentinck and Disraeli after all that had occurred was impossible. I was at liberty to take what course I pleased, and so were all your friends ; but I added the expression of feelings which bind me to you only more closely because my action is quite free.

Even when this was written, Lord George Bentinck had passed away, and Graham adds :

The account of the death of Lord George Bentinck has suddenly reached me, and gives rise to sad reflections, which turn the current of my thought from the course of public affairs.

I am sure that your feelings and mine, with respect to this melancholy close of a life which was indeed a fitful fever, are the same. If anything like resentment had been harboured, it is lost in the awe which this dispensation of Providence inspires.

The mind had been overwrought, and the body was fretted to decay. I saw symptoms of this in the last session, and henceforth sorrow and pity will soften every reflection connected with the memory of this unhappy man.

Sir Robert Peel replies :

DRAYTON MANOR, *September 26, 1848.*

The sudden death of Lord George Bentinck was indeed an awful proof of the precariousness of the tenure by which life is held. I thought a long and turbulent political career was in prospect before him, had some fears that the excitement of such a career might be too much for his temperament, but never deemed it within the bounds of possibility that in the twinkling of an eye, in the midst of life, he would be in death.

Hardinge told me that Lord Londonderry had detailed to him what passed between him and you. He said he told Lord Londonderry that he himself very much concurred in the opinion which you had expressed, particularly as to the difficulties in which a Protectionist Government with Lord Stanley at its head would be involved.

Lord Londonderry told Hardinge that he 'supposed'—I think that was the phrase—that there was great truth in all you had said to him ; that the spirit of the time was adverse to such principles of public policy as Lord Stanley must adopt ; but professed the utmost anxiety on the point on which all persons eager for office are naturally anxious, namely, 'What is to be done in the event of a dissolution of the present Government ?'

I was invited by Lord L. to Wynyard, but I thought the visit would assume something of a political character ; and I have no fancy for being paraded at horticultural breakfasts and bazaars.

My only loss has been the opportunity of meeting you.

In your cordial friendship and warm personal regard I have the utmost confidence, and am as desirous of retaining them in the retirement of private life as if I could make them conducive to the attainment of any object of political ambition.

i

To Mr. Lewis, Graham says on Lord George Bentinck's death :

Disraeli and the Protectionists are the great sufferers from this stroke of fortune. For, although on matters of trade the hatred of Peel betrayed George Bentinck into extravagant absurdities, yet on Irish questions, and wherever religious differences were concerned, his intuitive sense was a counterpoise to the bigotry and follies of the High Tory party ; and the loss of his influence will be severely felt.

I incline to the belief that his removal will facilitate a new construction of parties, and will simplify the line of demarcation between Liberals and their opponents, who will rapidly become unsophisticated Ultra Tories.

In October kindly letters were exchanged between Sir James and one of his oldest Whig friends. In announcing his father's death Lord Carlisle writes :

In writing to you I feel old memories crowding fast upon me. I pray for a place in your kind regards, and I wish you all the blessings that are above this world's chances, strains, and changes.

Sir James answers :

It is not only the length and varied circumstances of our acquaintance which fill me with regret when I lament the loss of your father. In looking back I am afraid that I may have sometimes grieved him. But my consolation is that he set the example of harbouring no resentment.

The past is beyond our reach ; it is a warning for the future, and for the short time which may still remain to

me I hope invariably to show that I regard you as the rightful heir to my constant attachment, both as a neighbour and as a friend.

Throughout the year Sir James Graham carried on a friendly correspondence with Mr. Cornwall Lewis on topics of the day, or of literary interest.

From Mr. Lewis

January 8.—The Duke of Wellington and the French invasion now occupy the stage. For my part I am unable to understand why there should just now be a sudden alarm, and why the defences which have proved sufficient ever since the introduction of steam navigation should at this moment be discovered to be insufficient.

Every profession, if it was allowed to have its own way, would increase its strength. Professional men form an ideal standard, and contract a disinterested love of seeing everything complete and in perfect order. The Duke of Wellington is too wary and sober-minded a man to be carried very far by this feeling ; but I question whether he is exempt from it.

I am told that a return was made a short time ago, showing that if everything was scraped together, and the Palace almost stripped of its sentinels, we could only muster in England 8,000 men. This certainly is not a very imposing force to defend the richest country in the world.

But there never was a worse-timed or more chimerical proposition than Cobden's. I fear that his Continental tour has not made him understand foreign politics and the feelings of the large European states. The truth is that we *have* done already what he says we ought to do, and we have long been waiting for them to reduce their great armies ; which they will not do, partly because they are afraid of one another, but chiefly because they are afraid of their own subjects.

How does Austria govern Lombardy and Hungary ? Certainly not by the force of opinion. How does Louis Philippe keep down the Parisians ? Are those forts built in order to remain unmanned ? I am told that

Sebastiani is now commanding an army of 70,000 men in and about Paris.

To Mr. Lewis

January 17.—I am much obliged by a letter from you, which led me to revive my acquaintance with the oration *Pro Sextio*, and greatly to enjoy the two splendid passages marked out by you.

There is hardly a noble and generous sentiment which these ancients have not felt, and embalmed in language never to be surpassed. What a privilege it is to be admitted into communion with such thoughts, and to draw wisdom, taste, experience, and precepts of good government from a mind like Cicero's !

From Mr. Lewis

January 27.—I am glad that you were interested with the passage in Cicero. I confess that for dignity and earnestness of feeling, and felicity of expression, nothing in modern oratory makes upon me the same impression as Cicero. It is difficult to conceive that anything so fine could have been produced extempore. The ancients certainly prepared their speeches more than the moderns, and looked upon oratory more as a work of art. They always make memory one of the main qualifications of a public speaker.

Their public assemblies sat less frequently than ours, and their statesmen had less business. A modern Minister may think himself fortunate if he has time to arrange his ideas in his head before he gets up to speak. A Roman senator had time to consider turns of expression, and to learn sentences by heart.

Cicero reported his own speeches. We read his own version, unchecked by any reporter. One should like to know whether he really delivered anything so finished and perfect as what we read.

In his time the Roman constitution was an impracticable one, and a monarchy was the only solution. Cicero and his friends went on in the vain attempt to govern Italy, and Sicily, and Africa, and Spain, and Greece, and Asia Minor, and Egypt with the old city constitution of

Rome. It was necessary to resort to a military despot, or to break up the Roman world into its ancient units.

The expedient of a representative Government, which is the true solution of the difficulty in which Rome was then placed, had not been thought of.

But which is the true solution ? Should Italy, Africa, Greece, and Spain—should the United Kingdom, India, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa—be ruled by one representative Government, or by many ? Mr. Lewis does not say. He only adds :

People may complain of a low electoral franchise, but the peaceful establishment of the representative principle, as opposed to the direct voting of each citizen, is a far greater triumph over democracy than was ever achieved by any party of Optimates in the ancient republics.

To Mr. Lewis

NETHERBY, *April* 22, 1848.

The distress among the working classes is severe and of long continuance : their discontent is becoming turbulent ; and in this temper they are easily led by designing men to desire and to urge organic change.

The example of France is highly stimulating ; and with Ireland on the verge of open rebellion we cannot be surprised that republican doctrines should find favour among large masses of the people.

A further reform of the representation will be the stalking-horse of the ambitious, and the war-cry of their dupes.

Whether to yield anything, or how much, is the nicest question of practical statesmanship which in the present juncture can be considered. No sound opinion can be formed without the knowledge of many circumstances which a Government alone can ascertain.

Once admit the necessity of a further enlargement of the suffrage, and it will be difficult to find a resting place until it become universal. Practically power is now vested in the hands of the middle classes ; transfer it

again and it will pass into a divided empire between aristocracy and the working classes, which will bring town and country into hostile array.

I cannot shut my eyes to the certainty that the establishment of a Republic in France will give immense activity to the democratic movement in this country ; and a rebellion in Ireland may be the signal for a servile insurrection which would spread far and wide.

I, however, am becoming old, sorrowful, and croaking. Associated with Lord John I had my share in a bloodless revolution which greatly extended the liberties of my country, and which permanently secured good government on popular principles, without danger to the Crown, to the rights of property, to the House of Lords, or even to the Church.

If our institutions are to be thrown into the crucible again, I cannot venture to hope that a better form of government will be devised, or that my countrymen will on the whole be happier : I can only pray that in the pursuit of theoretical perfections solid and real advantages may not be lost.

From Mr. Lewis

September 11, 1848.

I cannot help hoping that the Rebellion of 1848 may be to Ireland what the Rebellion of 1745 was to Scotland, namely, a death-blow to the hopes of the insurgent party. I am likewise trying to encourage myself into a belief that as the Irish Rebellion of 1798 was followed by the Union, so the rebellion of 1848 will be followed by some decisive measure which will place the Catholic body of Ireland in a new position as regards England.

It is melancholy to read Campbell's *Life of Lord Loughborough*, and to see how the accident of one unprincipled man in a high station, without any real power or policy, was able to defeat so wise and well-considered and important a scheme as Pitt's settlement of Ireland in 1800. A knave working upon a madman is a bad foundation for the government of great nations.

When Louis Philippe this year took refuge in England, Graham wrote a kindly letter.

*To Count Jarnac**Private.*46, GROSVENOR PLACE, *March* 8, 1848.

MY DEAR COUNT,—In days of prosperity I never presumed to intrude myself on the notice or recollection of the King of the French ; but in present circumstances it may perhaps gratify him to know that an old follower of Lord William Bentinck, who received from the King and the Queen many proofs of condescending kindness, has not now forgotten those obligations, and regrets with heartfelt sincerity the reverse of fortune which has pressed so heavily on their Majesties.

Remembering Sicily, I know well that none will bear sorrow and adversity better, but in the midst of misfortune it is sometimes a consolation to feel that past kindnesses have not been thrown away ; and if at a proper time and on a fitting occasion you could bring my name before His Majesty, I should be greatly indebted. I am afraid I can offer no useful service to the King ; but anything in my power he may command.

Count Jarnac replied :

MY DEAR SIR JAMES,—I am most grateful to you for your kind letter, and will not fail to communicate all you say to the unfortunate family at Claremont. I feel assured that they will be most happy to see *you*, whenever you may be inclined to go down to them, though they are living in the greatest retirement. Yours most truly,

JARNAC.

This was followed next day by a letter from ‘ the Comte de Neuilly ’ proposing an early day for an interview.

CHAPTER IV

1849

Whig Offer of the Admiralty and a Peerage declined—Regrets of Whig Friends—Clarendon on Ireland—Greville on Political Prospects—Conservative Overtures declined—Navigation Laws repealed—Graham's Speech—Correspondence on Protection—Everett on Free Trade—Reduced Rent.

IN 1848 Graham had declined Conservative overtures. January 1849 put it to the test whether he could be induced to join the Whigs. The death of Lord Auckland left vacant the office in which Sir James had first earned his reputation for administrative ability. Using that opportunity, Lord John Russell, at the unanimous wish of his Cabinet, attempted to enlist his old colleague's aid again as First Lord of the Admiralty, and urged him at least to come to town for a personal interview.

This request Sir James readily granted, and a colloquy took place, recorded briefly in Lady John's journal, but of course more fully by Graham. At first he had wished to consult Sir Robert Peel, but on second thoughts he wrote to Lord John :

After our conversation of this morning, the result of more mature reflection is that my mind is made up. I do not on the whole think it advisable to implicate Sir Robert Peel. If therefore you could see me in the course of this evening, I will state to you very shortly the reasons of my decision. I had rather do this verbally than in writing.

This [says Lady John] set us speculating which way his mind was made up, till he came, and declined. The grounds were that the Ministry were not prepared to go so far as he should think right in the Cobden line of retrenchment.

That was one of three grounds. Graham shrank from two other necessary conditions, namely, defending Palmerston's foreign policy, and the policy, as he understood it, of 'continued coercion, without remedial measures, in Ireland.'

All this he reported fully to Sir Robert Peel.

January 12, 1849.

Lord John does not appear to me sufficiently impressed with the urgent necessity of large retrenchments; and Palmerston has had too much and too long his own way to yield either to the influence of colleagues or to the control of public opinion. In Ireland also I see plainly that they are not prepared with measures of the scope and character which the dangerous state of that country appears to me to demand. After their denunciations of 'occupying and not governing Ireland,' they have relied on the sword and suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and have not attempted the redress of a single grievance. I suspect also that they have not yet closed the drain on the Exchequer in favour of Irish destitution, which is the cloak of much peculation, of many jobs, and of boundless corrupting patronage.

January 16.—Very early in my conversation with Lord John I observed to him that I had once already by my defection injured the Whig party—which was the party of my early choice and decided preference—and I must take good care not again to place myself under a similar necessity. I was compelled therefore, while I entertained his proposal, to go as it were into the state of the nation with him.

But first let me mention what his offer was. He referred to the two extremes represented by Cobden and the Protectionists, and said that, if the friends of a middle policy would not unite, the opposition of the

extremes would prevail, and serious injury would ensue. He was anxious therefore to extend the basis of his Government, and he and his colleagues desired that the first step should be taken by me. He added that the Queen was willing to confer on me the honour of the peerage, if that would be acceptable to me. He never mentioned the name of Sidney Herbert or of Lincoln, but he said that other vacancies would occur in the Cabinet, and he would discuss in a confiding spirit how they should be filled up.

Having listened to the proposal, I begged at the outset to disembarass it of two extraneous considerations. I told him that I did not desire a peerage, and that if I entered the Cabinet I wanted no companion, not deeming it expedient—as Mr. Pitt said—‘to count noses’ there, but relying on the honour and goodwill of the colleagues I consented to join.

We then went through in detail all the principal heads of foreign and home policy. The conversation lasted two hours.

I was assured that there was no intention of renewing the duty on corn, or of imposing new taxes; but the expenditure will only be reduced to a limit leaving the narrowest margin on the estimated balance; no duties will be modified, no taxes will be remitted; the reduction of the force by sea and land will be very small; and Palmerston’s foreign policy will be defended in all its parts.

With respect to Ireland (in strict confidence I may tell you) the renewal of the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act is intended, without, so far as I could discover, any comprehensive measure prepared for the improvement of the future social condition of that unhappy country.

I told Lord John that I feared the proposal of continued coercion without any concomitant would be most violently resisted.

This is only the outline of our conference. It was conducted throughout with the freedom of former colleagues and old friends, and for that day at least past animosities were forgotten. I endeavoured to impress on Lord John that I had no personal objection to himself;

on the contrary, that I should have more confidence in his Government if his controlling power were more predominant, and that it was not his supreme authority, but the absence of it, that I regarded with jealousy.

He seemed rather to anticipate High Tory reaction. Without anything expressly said, he contrived to convey to me that as against the Radicals he might be driven to some such combination.

Sir Robert Peel replied :

January 15.—I appreciate most fully the considerate feelings which induced you to give your decision to Lord John as the result of your own uninfluenced judgment, and therefore to dispense with the necessity of an interview with me.

It seems odd that I should not have heard a word on the subject of Lord John's proposal while I was at Windsor, and yet that Baron Stockmar should have said to Lady Peel that the offer of the Admiralty had been made to you. He silenced her doubts by saying emphatically, 'That which I tell you I know to be true.'

Baron Stockmar also informed Lord Lincoln that the grounds of the refusal, at which he expressed his satisfaction, were objections to the foreign policy, as well as to the insufficient extent of the financial reductions.

Lord Aberdeen wrote to Graham :

January 20.—You need be under no apprehension respecting the opinions and feelings of the Queen. Both the Queen and the Prince spoke to me very fully, and assured me that no other result had been thought possible, and that this was distinctly foretold by them from the first. You have every reason to be satisfied with the construction put upon your conduct.

For Ireland Graham still kept steadily in view, and not without hope, his own and Peel's late policy, interrupted by the famine, of active conciliation.

To Mr. Lewis

January 7.—First and foremost, for difficulties, stands Ireland. If the time really has gone by when it was possible to deal with the religious divisions in that country, and to ally the Roman Catholic priesthood to the State, I should fear that the case was desperate, and that the root of the evil cannot be touched. But I confess that I have not arrived at so gloomy a conclusion.

The success of the National system of education, which is complete, demonstrates that even religious animosities subside under the firm treatment of conciliatory measures steadily and prudently administered ; and I have a deep conviction that, when Great Britain sees, as she will, that Ireland will be her ruin if not well governed and really united to us, a crisis will arrive when patch-work must be thrown aside, and the whole scheme of Irish policy remolten, beginning with the Church, not omitting the elective franchise, and trial by jury, and ending with the abolition of the Lord Lieutenantcy.

It is vain to speculate when this time will arrive, or what will be the hand strong enough to accomplish this mighty work ; but I am convinced that it must be done, and that he who has the glory of achieving it will be the greatest benefactor to his country.

From several members of the Whig Government Sir James received gratifying assurances of their earnest wish that, in the public interest, he could have seen his way to accept their invitation.

From Mr. Lewis

I cannot express to you sufficiently with what sincere regret I have heard the result of your late journey to London.

On public grounds I should have rejoiced to think that the Government, at a moment so critical for the affairs of Europe, should have received an accession of so much capacity and political experience. On private grounds I should have had the highest satisfaction in thinking

that you were a member of a Government under which I was serving.

Sir James replies :

Lord John was most frank in his explanations, and generous in his offer. I was not unwilling to confide in him, but perhaps his influence does not penetrate sufficiently into all departments of his Government. . . . One good at all events has been effected. I hope and believe that Lord John and I parted with kind feelings of goodwill rekindled towards each other ; and it shall not be my fault if anything occur to disturb this better understanding.

Another friend, Mr. William Townley, remarks :

What passed is very gratifying as a proof that public principle is beginning to prevail over party feeling ; and for the change I think we are indebted to the conduct of Sir Robert Peel and yourself since you left office.

I remember no former period in which ex-Ministers did not organise and lead a bitter Opposition.

The offer to replace you in an important office which you had formerly filled is a deserved compliment. Had you accepted it, I should not have thought it any imputation, after the almost general agreement of last session. But still your friends might have been annoyed by the cry of barkers and snarlers, and on the whole I am glad that you have thought that the reputation of a public man should be like that of Cæsar's wife.

Lord Clarendon wrote from Dublin Castle :

I had heard from Lord John the result of your visit to London, and I can with truth say that nothing in all my official life ever grieved me more. It would not have affected me so much if I thought that in the event of Lord John not being able to carry on the Government the state of parties admitted of a strong Administration being formed by Sir Robert Peel and yourself. But, believing as I do that a Protectionist or a Radical Government must promote the cause of revolution, I am most

anxious that Lord John should remain in office, and that in the performance of his arduous duties he should receive the utmost possible support and assistance. Accordingly, as soon as I heard that our poor friend Auckland was no more, I stated to Lord John my reasons for thinking that if he could induce you to join him his Government would at once acquire the strength it stood in need of, and that every right-thinking man in the country would be satisfied, and feel confidence in such an arrangement.

It was with extreme pleasure I found that his opinions and wishes corresponded entirely with my own; and although it is not for me to question your decision, nor even to discuss, however I may appreciate, the motives of it to which you have alluded, still I certainly cannot but admit that, in the present state of things, anybody who exchanges a happy private life for a highly responsible office at the head of a great department of the Government, must make great sacrifices. At the same time, there were many circumstances in this case which must, I think, have at least caused you to hesitate.

I cannot be sorry for what has passed—the moral effect of it has been good. The country has seen, in the mere fact of the offer having been made and deliberated upon, that political or personal differences can be laid aside at the call of public duty; and it has revived kindly feelings between men who, although not connected by official ties, may still, I hope, labour together for the common good, and to avert the dangers by which we are all alike threatened.

The Cabinet I understand were unanimous in their desire that Lord John's negotiation might be successful, and equally so in their regret at its failure.

The rest of Lord Clarendon's letter gives with great frankness his views on the state and prospects of the country which at this time he had to rule.

DUBLIN CASTLE, *January 20, 1849.*

Ireland continues to be what she has always been, our monster difficulty; but with moderation, firmness,

justice, and time, I see no reason why this difficulty should not be overcome.

The real evils are social, and to remedy them it is in my opinion an error to reckon too much on legislation. You can't make the people dig the ground instead of scrape it, or go out to fish, or rely upon some other food than the potato, or prefer a slated house to a thatched cabin, or have a desire to better their condition. This can no more be done by law than you can make the people seven feet high. Neither will an Act of Parliament inspire the gentry and middle classes with a love of truth, nor make them live within their means, or spend their money to the best advantage for themselves and those dependent on them.

The process, however, is going on, though slowly, and it will be aided by the failure of the potato and the establishment of the Poor Law. But it will be accelerated to a degree that we English might be slow to believe by internal tranquillity. That is the *sine qua non* now to all improvement; for upon that depends confidence, which brings capital, the grand desideratum for Ireland. Political agitation has done more harm than the penal laws to the industrial resources and progress of Ireland; and so long as the great mass of the people are compelled to become idle politicians, and to look to some unattainable object for the relief of their misery, instead of relying upon their own exertions, so long must this country remain what it is, or become worse.

No despot of ancient or modern history ever misused absolute power as O'Connell did, and the present condition of Ireland is far more directly attributable to him than to any errors committed by the Imperial Legislature in the course of the last twenty years. But even in the last six months since the Repeal agitation and the revolutionary press were put down, a change has taken place that appears to me full of hope and promise; and if we could get three or four years' internal quiet, and the people were weaned from the pursuit of phantoms, and the English capital now ready for the purpose were imported, rely upon it our difficulties here would soon disappear.

There are various other subjects, including the payment

of the Roman Catholic clergy, upon which I should like to write to you.

Two notes from Mr. Greville at this date give his views as to the prospects of the Whigs and the Ultra Tories.

February 9.—The Cabinet are evidently divided in opinion—such opinions as they have ; for it is probably more near the truth to say that they are utterly at a loss, and have no idea what they can or ought to do.

They remind me of the King in one of Voltaire's tales who 'assembla son Conseil, et voici comme il parla, en grand politique : Je suis vieux, et je ne sais plus que faire.'

Of the Protectionists Greville says :

March 25.—Stanley really is prepared to take the Government, if he can get it, and he thinks he can. I could hardly believe it, in spite of all the symptoms there were, but it is certainly true.

Bright and Co. are chuckling over it, and would willingly help the Protectionists into office, knowing that nothing would so well forward their schemes. Those idiots, the great landed grandes—the Conservatives par excellence—are so blind that they cannot see the ruin into which they are doing their best to run.

If Graham hesitated to join the Whigs, still less was he disposed to come to terms with the Tory opponents of Peel. To his friend Lord Londonderry, who again approached him on this subject, he replied :

NETHERBY, *January 20*, 1849.

When we met at Wynyard in September, we discussed very fully the state of parties, and the peculiar position occupied by Sir Robert Peel. No subsequent occurrence has changed or modified the opinions which I then expressed.

Passion has much greater influence than reason in the guidance of human affairs, and the enmity between Peel

and the great body of the Conservative party is irreconcilable.

Lord Granby is heading a movement for the reimposition of a duty on foreign corn; and I am certain that the discussion of the Navigation Laws, with which the session will commence, will disclose on the part of the Protectionists unabated and fierce animosity towards Peel and his immediate followers; and the gulf which separates them will be widened.

I took my late decision without any consultation with Sir Robert, and since the end of the last session we have not frequently compared notes. But I find that our views and opinions almost always coincide, and my reliance on his superior sagacity, prudence, and fitness to govern remains unshaken.

It is true—and I consider it a misfortune—that he wishes to stand aloof, and not to direct or even to influence the conduct of others. But I never feel so certain that I am right as when I act in concert with him.

At all events, I cannot be a party to any new combination of his former colleagues and adherents in present circumstances to his exclusion. A Tory Government to which he was opposed could not stand.

The part which I may be drawn to take is not of much importance. But if parties are to be resolved into their first elements, and if new combinations are to be formed, it cannot be expected that I should side with the Ultra Tories.

I left the Admiralty and my party when I differed from my friends on a question which appeared to me important; I have refused the Admiralty with adoption of the policy of the Cabinet as now constituted. But the difference between me and the Government is not so wide as between me and the leaders of the implacable Protectionists.

To Sir Robert Peel Graham reports :

January 21.—I have had a letter from Lord Londonderry reviving his project of Conservative reunion. I have answered him by saying that Lord Granby's move in favour of the reimposition of the duty on corn is not

a conciliatory proof of returning confidence or of a wish to act in concert, and I added that the debates on the Navigation Laws must clear the atmosphere and show the state of parties very distinctly to the country.

This answer Lord Londonderry accepted as conclusive for the time.

WYNYARD PARK, *January 23, 1849.*

I am not going to bother you, my dear Sir James, with any rejoinder in argument to your very important and interesting letter. I have said all that an inferior intellect could urge ; I bow now to your superior reasoning, and I feel convinced the line you have marked out is most likely to lead to the safest and most permanent results for the good of the country.

I would not have intruded again so soon if I did not believe the following extract of a letter from Hardinge at Drayton Manor might particularly interest you.

[Extract]

Graham was offered a Peerage with the Admiralty. (N.B.—I thought as much, and undoubtedly the sacrifice is great. How many in these times would have withstood it ?)

Mine host is in excellent force, as determined as ever to persevere in his line of absolute retirement.

(Good ! But attending House of Commons, and deciding questions, is not what I call 'absolute retirement.')

The chief Government measure of 1849 was a Bill to repeal the Navigation Laws, and in support of this Graham delivered one of his most powerful speeches. After modest reference to his experience at the Admiralty, and to Acts affecting seamen prepared by him and accepted by the House on his motion ; and after expressing his deep conviction as to the national importance of the subject, he went on, with equal command of facts and of

principles, thoroughly to discuss the question in all its aspects, historical, economical, and political.

The historical origin of these laws [he said] may be traced to that old mercantile system which I thought had been long ago exploded and rejected.

Economically, 'the Navigation Laws,' says Adam Smith, 'are inimical to commerce, and to that prosperity which commerce guarantees.'

As to proposals to bargain for reciprocity in this matter, I admit that when that principle was introduced by Mr. Huskisson, it was at the time—considering what had been the rigorous character of navigation laws—both wise and politic. But in the abstract I do not see how we can attach much value to the principle of reciprocity. It makes the interest of others the measure of our interest; I had almost said, it makes the folly of others the measure of our wisdom.

Lastly Sir James discussed the political part of the subject, taking as his text a recent utterance of Lord Stanley.

It is refreshing to turn from the obscure and Delphic utterances of modern Ministers to the frank and manly declarations of principle by statesmen of the olden times. Lord Stanley had boldly announced :

I hear it said that Free Trade has been adopted, and that we must proceed in that course—*vestigia nulla retrorsum*. From that doctrine I dissent. Every day's experience convinces me that you must retrace the steps you have taken, you must return to the principle of Protection. I declare myself to be the uncompromising advocate of the old just and equitable principle which gave necessary protection—not monopoly—to the labourers and producers of their country, and to our fellow-countrymen wherever they are to be found throughout the world.

Sir James Graham replied with like precision.

That is an intelligible declaration, the explicit avowal of a future policy. I say, with equal frankness and equal boldness, that this measure you are now discussing is in my opinion the capital necessary to crown the work we have already accomplished. I say that without it what we have done is imperfect, that with it what we have achieved will not be easily undone. Here therefore issue is joined. I say that 'protection or no protection' is the point at issue; and I regard it as the battlefield on which the struggle must take place between reaction and progress.

I have calmly and deliberately reflected on the part I have borne in the changes which have recently taken place, and, so far from regretting that part, I believe—firmly believe—that the peace and tranquillity of this country, and the safety of our institutions, in the year which has just passed [1848], are mainly to be ascribed to those measures. I think that the attempt to go back upon them—to return to prohibitory duties, or under the guise of duties of import to lay on duties really of protection, enhancing the price of corn and of articles of the first necessity consumed by the great body of the people—would be a dangerous experiment, one leading inevitably to convulsion and to the most fatal consequences.

At all events my part is taken. I take my stand here. I am opposed to reaction. I am favourable to progress, tempered by prudence and discretion. It is upon those grounds that I give my cordial support to the Bill.

To this influential speech of Sir James Graham Sir Robert Peel did not think it necessary to add a word. The Prime Minister also, Lord John Russell, in closing the debate, said :

If I feel any difficulty in addressing the House, it arises from the consciousness that the whole argument in favour of the Bill has been exhausted by the masterly

speech of the right honourable Baronet. He went so completely through the argument, and touched on all the parts of it in so convincing a manner, that I feel great difficulty in saying more.

In reply, Mr. Disraeli recognised the importance of the speech. He lamented 'that one so eminent and experienced should have intimated his intention of taking his stand where he did.' 'For I must,' he said, significantly, 'express my regret that where he is he is likely in consequence to remain'—that is, outside the party of Lord Stanley.

After hearing the rival appeals, the House of Commons of 1849 gave a majority for the Bill of sixty-one. Finally, by a majority of ten, obtained partly by personal exertions of Sir Robert Peel and his friends, the House of Lords concurred in the repeal of the Navigation Laws; and with this result, that for the next half-century and more there have been, even beyond the sanguine hopes of Sir James Graham, unparalleled expansion and prosperity of the British mercantile marine, and, in connection with it, of the British Navy.

Much interesting correspondence of this year between Sir James Graham and Sir Robert Peel may be read in the Peel Papers. In the later months it turned chiefly on the probability of attempts to reimpose a protective duty on corn.

On this point Peel was resolute. He did not think it possible that Lord John Russell should go back from his Edinburgh letter, or do less than stoutly oppose any hankering that might exist in the Whig Cabinet to revert to their outworn policy of 1842—a fixed duty on corn, alike in years of plenty and in years of dearth. On his own part, if need were, he was prepared to do everything

in his power—even, if necessary, to form an alliance with Radicals—to prevent the madness of risking civil war in the interest of high rents for landowners as against cheap bread for the people.

Of the letters which follow some extracts have been published before.

To Sir Robert Peel

NETHERBY, August 27, 1849.

The mountain air and exercise have wrought their accustomed charm in renovating my health and in reviving my spirits. I hope that you have derived the same benefit in the enjoyment of your Highland home, the beauty of which is celebrated, and your description would lead me to believe that report has lessened truth. . . . My eldest son speaks always of Fasnakyle and of the strath in which you are now residing in terms of admiration and delight. He will gladly accept your invitation. It is a great pleasure to me that he will have the advantage of making your acquaintance.

From Sir Robert Peel

October 23.—Have you seen Lord Cloncurry's book? I do not wonder at Lord Anglesey's regret at the consent he gave to publication of his private letters. The public permanent proof they afford of his deference to Lord Cloncurry must be mortifying enough.

To Sir Robert Peel

October 28.—Your generous answer to Lord Hatherton's communication [on behalf of Lord Anglesey] is a token of amity that will not be thrown away on a man of Lord Anglesey's high spirit and noble nature. He is now tottering on the verge of the grave, and the recollection will be pleasing that you received his atonement with a good grace; that he had the love of justice to offer an apology, and you the magnanimity to forgive.

I have read the book. The disclosures appear to me conclusive against continuance of the Viceregal Government in Ireland.

From Mr. Lewis

November 5, 1849.

I have lately had the pleasure of meeting Frederick Peel, and renewing my acquaintance with him. It strikes me that the character of his mind is different from that of his father. He has, I think, more of the judge, and less of the advocate.

If Sir Robert Peel had been at the Bar, he would have got more verdicts than Scarlett. I suspect that Frederick Peel would succeed better at the Chancery Bar than with a jury. He is evidently a man of a strong and clear head and independent judgment, and is likely to succeed in any career suited to the texture of his mind which he follows steadily.

To Sir Robert Peel

Private.

NETHERBY, *November 14, 1849.*

I send you a letter from Ellice. You will observe what he says as to the intention of pressing for a five-shilling duty. I believe, if the Whigs dare, their secret desire is to revert to that proposal.

It is clear that Cobden's firm resistance alone prevented Lord John Russell from acceding to it in 1845.

From Sir Robert Peel

November 15.—If the Protectionists really meditate the serious proposal to revive any duty, fixed or fluctuating, on food, there will be a furious struggle. Whatever I can do to defeat the project I shall do with hearty goodwill.

November 17.—I should be very sorry that we were thrown into the company into which we must be thrown if the necessity of opposing a Government proposal to reimpose duties on food be forced upon us. There can be no lukewarmness, in my opinion, in that opposition.

A hint in time [to Mr. Ellice] might be serviceable, and a reference to the personal position of the Prime Minister not a bad hint.

I totally disbelieve the rumours, from whatever quarter they may come, that Lord John Russell would propose the restoration of any duty on the main articles of food in this country—meat, corn, etc.

He said last session most distinctly that the proposal—practicable if accepted when originally made—would now be absurd.

It must indeed be an overwhelming sense of public duty and public necessity that would induce Lord John to sanction such a project. In November 1845, when the country was on the eve of great danger from the scarcity of food, and in a very inflammable state, he declared himself to be adverse to any duty upon food. He said ‘the struggle to make bread scarce and dear’—when it is clear that part of the additional price goes to increase rents—‘would be a struggle deeply injurious to the aristocracy.’

If a struggle in 1845 to retain a portion of established Protection would have been thus injurious, what terms would describe a struggle now to reanimate Protection?

He called on the country to ‘unite to put an end to a system which has been proved to be the blight of commerce and the bane of agriculture.’

Nothing could have justified Lord John’s letter, considering the time and circumstances under which it was written, but deep conviction founded on consideration and experience.

But you will recollect that Lord John hesitated—almost refused—to take office in December 1845, unless I would pledge myself to the Queen to support the Government which he was about to form in the proposal of immediate and total repeal of the Corn Laws.

Depend upon it that Lord John, and many at least of his colleagues, would prefer the alternative of breaking up twenty Governments to the alternative of such a fearful struggle as must follow the attempt by a Government to reimpose duties on the import of food.

To Sir Robert Peel

November 22.—I showed Ellice your letter, stating why you believed it to be impossible for Lord John not to

resist the proposal of a fixed duty. He read the letter through without comment, and gave it back to me, saying, 'I agree with every word of this.' But he carefully avoided the expression of any opinion with regard to the intention of the Government.

He himself argued that public opinion was shaken with respect to Free Trade, and that the fall of wages and want of work in the agricultural districts had rendered the labourers discontented with the present state of affairs.

From Sir Robert Peel

WOBURN ABBEY, *November 27, 1849.*

The Duke showed me an admirable letter which old Arbuthnot had written to a croaking country banker, censuring him for spreading panic among the farmers, and telling him that the restoration of the boroughs in Schedule A was a more probable event than the renewal of Protection.

Arbuthnot tells his friend moreover—what I was right glad to read, though the fact had escaped my recollection—that he told me in 1844 that the Corn Laws could not be maintained against the growing influence of public opinion. The whole letter does the greatest credit to him. I hope he does not speak his own opinion only.

Private and Confidential.

December 6.—The Duke of Bedford gave me an opportunity of which I availed myself of speaking my mind to him freely on the subject of any attempt under any pretext to renew protective duties. I have this day received from him the enclosed, which I take to be decisive.

[Enclosure]

WOBURN ABBEY, *December 5, 1849.*

It is well for the country, and a mercy to us all, that the Corn Law question was settled when it was. But when difficulties and dangers are passed people are apt to forget the escapes they have had.

I never voted for any change in the Corn Laws till I supported your measure in 1846. I had no clear

conviction on the question till then. But I am now persuaded that if a successful attempt were made to retrace our Free Trade steps we should witness the commencement of a war of classes.

To Sir Robert Peel

December 8.—Before we renounced Protection, we counted the cost, and weighed the balance of conflicting dangers. Among them I never overlooked the certainty that free trade in corn, once established by the Legislature, was an irrevocable step.

Still I did not hesitate, and I do not now regret my decision. The crisis was imminent, no time was to be lost, and my firm belief is that we saved the nation from ruin.

If the landowners are to be ruined, I shall be among the first. But I feel that I did my duty to the public. When I was their servant, all other considerations were secondary. Yet even as a proprietor of bad land I do not despair. And as to the welfare of the community I am certain that immense and lasting benefits have been received.

From Sir Robert Peel

December 19.—Charles Wood travelled with Lord Villiers yesterday. He said, ‘Tell Sir Robert that we had six Cabinets, and the Corn Laws never once mentioned in one of them.’ This he said with reference to reports of disunion and of serious discussions on renewed Protection.

To Sir Robert Peel

NETHERBY, *December 23, 1849.*

Come what may, I am happy in the reflection that I am cordially united with you, and that we shall act together in the midst of future difficulties, as we have done now for so many years, without a shadow of difference or misgiving.

I care little about the various projects afloat for tinkering the Administration. None of the changes contemplated will strengthen it. That it should be able to stand for the present is the great object.

December 28.—If Lord John Russell be determined not to bring forward measures of organic change or extensive parliamentary reform, I wish that he had had the prudence not to excite delusive expectations by his unqualified declaration that an extension of the franchise to classes now excluded was justly due. I told him at the end of last session in a private conversation that when the First Minister of the Crown, one of the authors of the Reform Act, had made this avowal in his place in Parliament, there was no safety except in the production of a specific measure ; for any wild scheme short of universal suffrage might fairly be considered to be the extension which he contemplated and intended. I observe that he uses the expression ‘extensive’ parliamentary Reform. Any petty addition which he may propose will be rendered abortive by the hopes which he has raised ; he will satisfy no craving appetite by the meagre cates which he will provide.

The truth is that this Government drew bills at a long date. They are all now falling due at a most inconvenient moment, and they will have immense difficulty in meeting their improvident and numerous engagements.

There is a position between Tory prejudice and mountain movement, which I believe to have been tenable. But Lord John has occupied it feebly ; he has lost much precious time, and it will not now surprise me if he be driven from it. I look with serious alarm to the immediate, and still more to the ultimate, consequences of his defeat.

A long letter to Sir James Graham from one of the ablest and most popular of American Ambassadors to the British Court may be of special interest at the present time. It is a voice from the past—and not that of a whole-hearted believer in Free Trade—bearing witness to the serious mischief wrought in the United States more than half a century ago by the political intrigues which (in Mr. Everett’s judgment) sprang inevitably from a Protective tariff, placing great pecuniary interests

at the mercy of legislation governed by a democratic franchise.

From Mr. Everett

CAMBRIDGE [U.S.], December 19, 1849.

I take great pleasure in your assurance that the tradition of my occupancy is not worn out at No. 46, Grosvenor Place. I passed there three very happy years of my life, clouded indeed with one severe domestic affliction, but full of agreeable though laborious employment in the duties of my office, and—thanks to the boundless kindness of my friends in England—in the enjoyment of free intercourse with the most cultivated society in the world.

I have taken a deep interest in the changes which have occurred in England since I left it. The repeal of the Corn Laws came sooner than I anticipated, although I thought it a question only of time.

If Lord Stanley, Mr. Disraeli, and those of your statesmen who under their lead still cling to a shred of Protection, had our American experience of the nature of all movements in a popular direction, they would save a good deal of breath, which is likely to be very unprofitably—however skilfully—expended. There are no *vestigia reirorsum* in matters of this kind.

I do not say this as a disciple of the extreme doctrines of Free Trade. I believe the manufacturing system of this country to have been exceedingly beneficial to it. But I often tell my manufacturing friends that they had better be satisfied with what they can do *without Protection*, although I believe that it would be better in a new country like ours to have the great branches of industry built up by moderate protecting duties, which are necessary as a safeguard against the irregularities and occasional gluts of the foreign market, and to prevent the standard of compensation for labour here from being brought down to the foreign level, which we think—however unavoidable—to be unfavourable to the well-being of a community.

But so much evil results from the *political agitation* which infallibly springs from a protective system, and it is so mischievous to have great pecuniary interests at

the mercy of our changeful legislation, that I believe it is better in the long run to get on without it.

Of Protection in England at this time Sir James writes :

To Mr. Lewis

November 14.—The farmers are very angry, and the landlords have succeeded in convincing them that they can no longer pay their present rents without Protection.

Protection will be found impossible ; reduction of rent is the alternative ; and the wiseacres have dug a grave for themselves, in which they will be quietly interred, while the farmers will make merry at the funeral.

In the meantime the increased comfort of the great body of consumers is fully demonstrated by the reports of the last nine months, and by the healthy condition of our manufactures.

Land must accommodate itself to the new order of things, which it is impossible to reverse, and Governments must be chary with regard to expenditure. Increased taxation will not be endured.

CHAPTER V

1850

Disraeli invites Graham to become Leader of the Conservative Party—Letter from Lord Londonderry—Graham's Reply—Disraeli's Motion for Relief to Agriculture—Supported by Gladstone—Opposed by Graham and Peel—Foreign Policy—Palmerston and Aberdeen—Peel and Graham—Don Pacifico Debate—Death of Peel—' Papal Aggression '—Peel on Graham—Lady Peel.

IN 1849 the Whigs had sought Sir James Graham's aid in office. In the next year he was offered the lead of the Conservative party. Mr. Disraeli thus records the overture :

In 1850, when the balanced state of parties in the House of Commons indicated the future, I endeavoured, through the medium of the late Lord Londonderry, and for some time not without hope, to induce Sir James Graham to accept the post of leader of the Conservative party, which I thought would remove all difficulties.¹

The parliamentary situation when this offer was made is described by Mr. Cornwall Lewis :

HOME OFFICE, *January 24, 1850.*

The Protectionists are mustering all their forces. They are very savage, and live in a state of perpetual growl. Their numbers are large in Parliament, and they are united as to the grievance ; but they cannot agree as to the remedy, and they do not like their leaders. The more rational of them admit the impossibility of restoring

¹ Letter to Mr. Gladstone in 1858 : Morley, i. 587.

Protection, but the sort of language they hold is that they are entitled to expect some relief from the Government; the Government *must* do something for them. When you ask what this *something* is to be, it ends in some vague proposal about local burdens and income tax.

I cannot see that the agriculturists have any parliamentary case for legislation. Poor relief and crime have diminished since September, the revenue is improving, and exceeds the expenditure, no new taxes are required. The funds are high, the bank abounds with bullion, the rate of interest is low. Manufacturers and commerce are universally in a prosperous state. Even the shipping interest does not despond.

If it is said that the prices of agricultural produce are low, it cannot be complained that the removal of Protection has produced the effect which it was intended to produce. Otherwise, why was Protection removed on account of a famine?

In a letter dated February 18, 1850, Lord Londonderry details 'what passed between me and D'Izzy after we were left alone the other evening, all the party having gone.'

He descanted first on the power he had, in his present lead in the House of Commons. He went to Burleigh, where the Ultra-Protectionists were entirely mistaken as to their deductions on Free Trade. He showed them, and proved from the best authority, that every interest except the landed was improving in the country. Still, the amendment was absolutely necessary to satisfy the farmers.

For himself he had long seen Protection was out of the question, and he was looking to practical measures. He strongly felt, and plainly saw, his command was only temporary. He was working for another, trying to organise a better and more efficient Government. Neither his position in the country, his family, nor the prejudices against him let him suppose he could be the Minister in the House of Commons in this country, and the Minister in the end *must* always be there.

The time for action was approaching, and must come, if prices got up. In such an event he was ready to call his friends together, and tell them they must look to the best practicable mode of governing the country ; that Sir James Graham was the only man then to be at the head of the House of Commons ; that *he* should cheerfully act under him ; that whatever coolness now existed between Graham and Stanley he was himself not conversant with, but that he had always found Stanley so manageable and agreeable to act and deal with that he felt sure he would see these views as they would be placed before him ; and that, with Stanley in the Lords and Graham in the House of Commons, the country would have a very strong Government. It was his intention so to shape his motion that he thought Peel's friends would not object to it. It was his utmost desire now to conciliate them, as the only efficient means of preserving the best institutions in the country by a powerful union against the Destructives.

Now [Lord Londonderry adds] you can take this conversation for just as much as you fancy it may be worth. It was communicated without any reserve, and in no shape confidentially.

I certainly remember a note of yours some time ago, in which you said ' you would be no party to any political combination ; your line was not the way to power.' That may all be right and true. Still, the other day you let out that power was undoubtedly what every man lived to possess. If then there chance to be a power which might make a man—evidently, *malgré lui*, devoted to the House of Commons—First Minister of this great Empire, you nor no man living will persuade me that it is not a chance to be wide awake to, a road from which he should not turn aside, if he can find a commodious, safe, intelligible, and clean line to travel it.

P.S.—I am quite willing Peel should know this, as I have ever been loyal to him, and my friendship for D'Izzy is of very old standing, long before any breeze between them.

To this Sir James Graham made prompt answer.

*To Lord Londonderry**February 18, 1850.*

I have always communicated to you without reserve my feelings and opinions as to the state of parties, whenever in our friendly intercourse you have brought the subject into discussion. I receive in the same spirit your report of a recent conversation with Mr. Disraeli ; and, as far as I am concerned, in frankness I am bound to tell you that it can lead to no result.

I am glad indeed to hear that both he and Lord Stanley now perceive that every interest in the country, except the landed, is improving ; that they do not even despair of a natural rise in the price of agricultural produce, and that Mr. Disraeli is convinced that Protection is out of the question.

The public good will be promoted if the leaders of the Opposition act steadily and boldly in conformity with these convictions. As yet they are entertained in secret, and the measures taken in public seem to be at variance with them.

I fully participated in the counsels of Sir Robert Peel, and his conduct, which was so severely censured, was entirely approved by me. I admit that power is the legitimate object of Parliamentary conflict, and of honourable ambition ; but I know how worthless it is if it be not obtained by means which public opinion sanctions and private judgment approves. I write to you this answer at once without communicating with any one. It is best that you should know my own strong convictions.

This reply, one would think, must for the time have extinguished hope. At any rate next day, when Mr. Disraeli moved for a Committee on the Poor Laws for the purpose of affording relief to the agricultural classes, Sir James Graham opposed the motion. Mr. Gladstone, who supported it, thus describes the debate :

There was an amusing scene between Graham and Peel. Both rose and stood in competition for the Speaker's eye.

The Speaker had seen Graham first, and he got it. I felt I had no choice but to follow him. He made so very able a speech that this was no pleasant prospect, but I made my plunge when he sat down, and I had to make the best I could after Graham. Peel replied upon me.¹

Mr. Disraeli's public utterance was hardly in accord with Lord Londonderry's report of his private talk. He spoke in Parliament to this effect :

Upon this side of the House we believe that the surest course, the most efficacious, would be the re-establishment of laws regulating the importation of foreign agricultural produce. We believe that the principles upon which you have constructed your commercial code are fallacious, that the time will come when you yourselves will acknowledge it. Still, we cannot shut our eyes to the conclusion that it is the opinion of a large majority in both Houses not to disturb at present the settlement at which the country has recently arrived.

But if you deprive us of that system of legislation under which we have so long enjoyed our property and pursued our industry, we ask this of you in the name of justice, that you should revise the system of taxation in this country.

My business to-night is to touch only partially on one portion of the great theme which will, I believe, for a considerable time amply occupy the attention of Parliament.

Last year I was told that my design was too vast, and that the state of the Treasury would not permit the Government even to consider any such proposition. I hope I shall not be told now that my design is too limited.

Mr. Disraeli then explained that, if a Committee were granted, he would submit to it three proposals : to place upon the Consolidated Fund (1) the 'establishment charges' for the relief of the poor ; (2) all rates (except

¹ Morley, i. 356.

county and police rates) levied by the machinery of the poor law; (3) the cost of providing for the casual poor.

I hardly know [he said] what arguments we are to encounter; we ask so little, and that little is so easy to be granted. While I believe that the English people are prepared, when the constitution gives them an opportunity, to vindicate the industrial principles which they think ought to prevail, yet in the present House, where we are met by a pledged majority which will hardly listen to a discussion of that nature, if we cannot accomplish immediately any great financial result, we are at least achieving this great political purpose, that we may teach them not to despair of the institutions of their country.

What this practically meant, a statesman of Sir James Graham's perspicacity and experience saw at once, and made clear to the House.

The question raised [he said] is no less than this—whether we shall commence a review of the whole fiscal burdens of the country. As it was put by the hon. member himself, it is but ‘the commencement of a series’ of propositions he is about to lay before us. The present motion, he informs us, is but part of the detail of a question which he last year placed before us in ampler form.

The question is whether you will transfer the entire poor rate to the Consolidated Fund. But it does not rest there. The hon. member told you, with perfect frankness, that he passed by the land tax, but it was only for the purpose of argument he did so. Therefore we are about to discuss, in principle, whether burdens of some eighteen or twenty millions should be transferred from the land to the Consolidated Fund.

Is there justice in this demand? Will you consent to a reversal of your recent policy? Will you take a large part of the burdens now resting upon property, and place it upon labour and industry?

As a country gentleman I have always urged upon the class to which I belong the great impolicy of pursuing their interests as a class apart from the interest of the

entire community. I have always told them that with the community at our back we are irresistible ; but if we as a class pursue our interests at the expense of the general interests, we are altogether powerless ; our overthrow is certain.

I will read a list of articles which constitute not only the humble comforts, but also the means of subsistence of the working classes. After all our efforts to relieve them, there still remains a tax upon the following articles. I will begin with timber and bricks, of which their humble dwellings are composed ; butter and cheese, which after bread constitute a large portion of their food ; soap, which is indispensable to their cleanliness. I will next mention the small luxuries and condiments to their humble and indifferent fare—tea, sugar, molasses, currants and raisins. There remain articles of the character of narcotics and stimulants, by the help of which they seek to obtain a short oblivion of their sorrows and their cares—tobacco, spirits, and malt, the staple of their beer. What is the amount of the taxes levied on these, almost the necessities of humble life ? They amount to more than the interest of the National Debt, to upwards of £31,000,000. When they already bear this, is there justice in transferring existing burdens from realised property to the shoulders of the commercial, manufacturing, and rural labourers ?

Nor is that all. The proportion of taxation borne by land, as distinguished from other real property—canals, docks, manufactories, railways, etc.—in the year 1826 was 69 per cent., and other real property bore 31 per cent. In 1849 the burden on land had fallen to 45 per cent. of the whole, and the burden on other property had risen to 55 per cent. Your local burdens as landowners have become lighter ; it is the course of prudence to let well alone.

And cannot the burdens on land be lightened in another way ? I hope the House will excuse me for what I am next going to mention. It is not anything like personal vanity which prompts me ; I wish to depose as a witness to what can be done by local management, and by close attention to local burdens. My estates came under my control in 1822. My first attention was directed to

diminish the local burdens. From 1822 up to the present time we have succeeded in lowering the poor rate 35 per cent., the highway rate 36 per cent., and the county rate 40 per cent. Such has been the effect of local control on local expenditure.

Let me ask further, Are there not exemptions enjoyed by the land? The land is exempt from the payment of all duty on the descent of property, whereas since 1797 personal property has paid £60,000,000. The following also enjoy exemptions—horses employed in agriculture, insurance on stock and crop, servants employed in husbandry, tax-carts, dogs of shepherds, tolls on lime and manure, window duty on farmhouses under £200 a year. And, what should never be forgotten, if the land tax were levied in strict conformity with the original law of William III., it would yield annually nine millions.

I grieve to have heard in this debate expressions of animosity against particular classes. I wish to see them all united, happy, and contented. And I must maintain that the policy which I have adopted, with an earnest desire to do what I thought right and just to all classes, is, in my heart and conscience I believe, most conducive to the true welfare of the landed interest.

Mr. Gladstone, speaking next, expressed his hearty concurrence with Sir James as to the general effect of Free Trade, but went on to explain why he would vote against him.

His right hon. friend appeared to be governed not by that which was in the motion, but by that which was not in the motion. He alarmed the House with threats of ulterior measures which there might be an intention to propose. But by voting for this motion a member would not be committed to any such measures. He supported the motion because he thought the adoption of it would tend to weaken the agitation for restoration of Protection; but also on the ground of justice. The landed interest, it was true, did inherit poor rates with their land; but they inherited also a protective system which had given to this property an artificial value. It was not just to

plead the inheritance against removing the poor rate, when the other corresponding system had been taken away.

If he looked to the case of the peasantry, how did Sir James Graham's list of articles tell upon them? The removal of taxes on bricks and timber had no immediate bearing on this class; tea, sugar, molasses, raisins, etc., he feared the labouring men of the south and west of England seldom indulged in. Relief in that respect could not compare with the advantage they would derive from a more cheerful resolution of the farmer to improve the cultivation of the soil.

Sir Robert Peel, rising chiefly to answer Mr. Gladstone, after compliments, addressed himself to that task.

My right hon. friend [he said] takes the specific terms of the motion and contends that he is perfectly at liberty to dismiss all extraneous considerations, and to consider only the abstract proposals.

That is not the construction which the tenant farmers will place upon the motion. It will have excited the hopes of the agriculturists. A motion is made for the purpose of giving them the compensation to which they are said to be entitled for the wrong done to them by the removal of Protection.

The hon. mover contends that the burdens unjustly thrown upon the landowners are not less than twelve millions a year. He says, 'I won't go into the general and extended question at the present time; I propose now only the partial removal of taxation to the amount of two millions. But don't be deceived. This is only the first of a series of measures. Others will follow, adopting the same principles.'

The proposed removal of two millions of taxation is accompanied by a distinct notice that this is not a measure closing the account—it is but a small and partial instalment of a great debt—and that if it be acquiesced in by us the claim for the remainder will be prosecuted. It is a proposal involving a principle. There will be no satisfaction with a mere partial admission of one portion of a great claim, the rest of which is to be contested.

After thus answering Mr. Gladstone, Sir Robert Peel went on, in a powerful speech, to enforce the appeal of Sir James Graham against beginning a reversal of the Free Trade policy which had done so much to lighten the burdens and to promote the welfare of the humbler working population.

Owing chiefly to the speeches of Peel and Graham, the motion was defeated, but by a majority of only twenty-one, Gladstone voting for it in the minority with Disraeli.

The next and last debates of importance in 1850 were on Foreign Policy. In the Lords the action of Palmerston in violently enforcing disputed claims on Greece was censured by a majority of thirty-seven. To repair this, in the Commons Mr. Roebuck moved a resolution approving of the general conduct of the Government in foreign affairs.

Correspondence on this subject between Graham and Peel has been given in the Peel Papers. They agreed in apprehending grave results from Palmerston's action. But they were at one also in deeming it more important to support a weak Government committed to Free Trade than by public censure of its Foreign Minister to risk its fall and the accession of Protectionists to power.

Graham wrote to Peel :

NETHERBY, *April* 3, 1850.

I return Aberdeen's letter. Either from choice or from necessity, the present Government is so identified with Palmerston that his overthrow would be the fate of the Administration. He must be endured, or active hostilities must be openly waged against the Government on the avowed ground that his management of our foreign relations is inconsistent with the peace of Europe, and with the reduction of our huge military and naval establishments.

It is a choice of dangers and of evils, and I am disposed to think that Palmerston and his foreign policy are less to be dreaded than Stanley and a new Corn Law.

Then followed the last letters that were to pass between Graham and Peel.

From Sir Robert Peel

April 6.—It was a source of true satisfaction to me to find that on the question started by Aberdeen the conclusions to which you and I had come were so entirely in unison.

To Sir Robert Peel

April 7.—I make great allowances for Lord Aberdeen's soreness and impatience. He attaches primary importance to our foreign relations, and in his estimation our domestic policy is secondary. At home he is liberal, but not an enthusiast ; abroad he is a zealot, in the sense most opposed to Palmerston.

I cannot agree with him in opinion, that private remonstrance would be consistent either with the dignity of your position or with the gravity of the public interests at stake.

Your own view appears to me entirely correct. If you indicate dissatisfaction, a motion will be made which you must either oppose or support. If supporting you carry it, the responsibility of forming a Government devolves on us.

On these grounds for some months longer Peel and Graham refrained from making public their growing disapproval. But being at last challenged to support, as against Lord Aberdeen and the House of Lords, a vote of confidence in the policy of Palmerston—they concurred in judging that they could no longer honourably keep back their true opinions.

Sir Robert Peel's speech, his last, is well known. Sir

James Graham's dealt more in detail with the grounds for withholding confidence.

I am dragged into this discussion [he said] most unwillingly. On a question of this kind I think intentional absence would be cowardice ; and silence, coupled with the opinions which I entertain, is equally impossible. Will the House pardon me if for a moment I advert to my own position ? I have given to the Government for the last four years an independent and an honest support, because in the state of parties I thought it my duty so to do. It was my good fortune also for four years to be Lord Palmerston's colleague. During that period I never acted with any person whose conduct appeared to me more honourable, or with whom I constantly maintained more friendly relations. He and I, from the offices we held in the Government of Earl Grey, were forced into the most confidential and perpetual communication. I am anything but hostile either to the Government or to the noble lord.

Yet I must remember that we are now invited to discuss not the narrow question of Greece simply. The question propounded is, Do you on the whole approve of the foreign policy pursued by the Government since their last accession to office ?

It cannot for a moment be supposed, by those who recollect the transactions with reference to foreign powers in which the Government of Lord Grey was engaged, that I am inclined to limit within very strict rules the necessity for English interference in the pursuit of English interests, or even with reference to the internal affairs of foreign nations.

I was a party to the blockade of the ports of Holland and to the expedition to Antwerp. I supported all the measures for the separation of Belgium and Holland, which was a direct departure from the treaty of Vienna. We interfered also with respect to Portugal very decisively, to the extent not only of blockading the ports, but even of landing forces, and we confirmed the dynasty of Don Pedro, and expelled Don Miguel. These were acts of strong interference, but so conducted as not to

violate the opinions of our allies, and not to interrupt the most friendly intercourse with all the Great Powers of Europe.

Sir James Graham proceeded to comment on the overbearing tone of Lord Palmerston in dealing with foreign nations—his lectures to Spain in 1846, regarded by the French Government as a declaration of hostility of the British Government to the Government of Spain ; his admonitions to the Spanish Government in 1848, which led to an order for the British Ambassador to leave the Court of Madrid ; and his siding with ultra-republicans in Switzerland. He went on to charge Lord Palmerston with having been, on account of a quarrel with M. Guizot over the Spanish marriage, in constant communication with his political opponents, who not only overthrew M. Guizot, but established a Republic. He accused him of having for eight months suppressed an answer from Metternich, solemnly denying Palmerston's assertion (laid before Parliament) that Austria had designs on the independence of the Italian States. Then, when Piedmont attacked Austria, and Austria appealed for British mediation, Lord Palmerston had insisted on a condition precedent, that Austria should not only abandon Lombardy, but surrender Venice.

It is impossible to say what has been the effect of that act of the noble Viscount. . . . Has he promoted the cause of Italian liberty by the course he has pursued ? Piedmont has been twice in one year at the mercy of the invading army of Austria ; Rome is in possession of the French army ; Lombardy is under the military rule of Austria ; Venice is re-conquered. The King of Naples has vindicated by force of arms his power against the Sicilian insurgents. These men had relied on our assistance ; they were overcome, we left them to their

fate, and a large body of refugees, flying to Malta in despair, were refused by the British Governor an asylum.

What then has been the present outcome of all this policy? The Austrian Ambassador has been withdrawn from London; the French Ambassador has been recalled; our relations with Prussia are insecure. We have every reason to believe that the Russian Envoy at this Court, previous to the recall of the French Ambassador, remonstrated against the refusal of our Government to ratify the Convention agreed to in London.

And now—on the ground that the noble Viscount ‘is not the Minister of Austria, or of Russia, or of France, but is the Minister of England’—I am asked to come to a vote affirming absolutely that under his guidance the interests of England have been preserved in a manner most conducive to the interests of this country, and to the maintenance of amicable relations with foreign Powers. It is impossible for me, consistently with truth, and with my construction of the transactions which I have laid before the House, to give any such vote.

In reply to his critics Lord Palmerston delivered a telling speech of four hours’ duration. His mastery of the details of his own acts gave him in argument an advantage over opponents. Against Graham his chief point was that in 1833 the strong measures taken against Holland with Graham’s active concurrence were quite as distasteful to other Powers as anything which Palmerston had done since. The charge of using offensive language to foreign Governments he was able to meet with a *tu quoque* directed against Lord Aberdeen. The resolution of the House of Lords he represented as ‘laying down for the future a principle at variance with the practice not only of this but of all other civilised countries in the world—that British subjects abroad must not look to their own country for protection, but must trust to that indifferent justice which they may happen

to receive at the hands of the Government and tribunals of the country in which they may be.'

Had that been the real purport of Lord Stanley's resolution, of course Parliament and the country would have been unanimous against it. Even as it was, the effect was great when Palmerston recurred to this point in his well-known peroration :

I fearlessly challenge the verdict which this House is to give on the question whether, as the Roman in days of old held himself free from indignity when he could say '*Civis Romanus sum*,' so also a British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England shall protect him against injustice and wrong.

The House of Commons gave the Government a majority of forty-six, and the prevailing feeling was similar in the country. Palmerston writes to his brother :

The attack on our foreign policy has been rightly understood by everybody as the shot fired by a foreign conspiracy, aided and abetted by a domestic intrigue ; and the parties have so entirely failed in the purpose that, instead of expelling and overthrowing me with disgrace, as they intended and hoped to do, they have rendered me for the present the most popular Minister that for a very long course of time has held my office.

Letters to Graham from personal friends express other opinions.

From Lord Londonderry

June 28, 1850.

Now your speech is over, I may with great truth and without one reflection assure you what extreme delight it has given me. It is admirable and *happy* in all its parts.

Your rejection of office and peerage [from the Whigs] in 1849, when you could not approve, and your enlightened *exposé* of mischievous foreign policy—come what may—must ever add to your reputation, and give you the applause of your own conscience, although *not the road* to power.

From Mr. Greville

June 27.—I hear that Palmerston's speech has given anything but pleasure at the Palace.

Meanwhile its success with the Radicals, and even with the Whigs, seems to be boundless. It seems to me that he has managed to make his own position in the Government stronger and more unassailable, and as long as he chooses to retain the Foreign Office nobody can take it from him but by a complete change.

Tufnell told me the enthusiasm he had excited was immense, and he had decided many doubtful votes. His adherents and *laudatores* talk of the speech in the most extravagant terms—'that it is the greatest ever delivered in the House of Commons—superior to Sheridan's great speech,' which nobody alive can have heard.

Nothing strikes me more than the incredible ignorance of the majority of the House of Commons, and how they may be taken in by an adroit and clever man who knows them thoroughly; and this Palmerston is, and does—nobody more so.

No one who has read the correspondence between Peel and Graham can regard their conduct as prompted by 'intrigue.' They rejoiced in having been able to give an honest vote without displacing a Government which on other grounds they were anxious to support.

It was the last time that they were to act together. A few hours after the debate closed, Peel was thrown from his horse and brought home fatally injured.

For three days the doctors had good hopes of his recovery. They did not know till after his death that a broken rib had pierced the lung, and was the chief cause

of the agonising pain which prevented thorough examination of the mischief. The three last written accounts received by Sir James Graham were as follows :

From Lord Aberdeen

July 1.—The account of Peel this morning seems very favourable; but I suppose we must wait a day or two before we can feel secure.

From Lord Hardinge

Two o'clock, July 2, 1850.

I send you the last bulletin received. I have seen Dr. Hawkins, who speaks with confidence of his recovery.

The pulse was 135 during the night, it is now 115. He has taken tea and broth, and walked round the room, supported on each side.

It is *quite* certain that the horse misbehaved and threw him.

[Enclosure]

July 2, 1.30 p.m.

Sir Robert Peel expresses himself as suffering less pain, and in other respects is quite as well as he was in the morning.

From Sir Benjamin Brodie

WHITEHALL GARDENS [*July 2*], 8.30 p.m.

It grieves me to address this note to you, but I am sure that I do no more than you could wish me to do in informing you that Sir Robert Peel is *very much worse*.

Soon after eleven o'clock his sufferings ceased, and the spirit took its flight. Lord Hardinge and Sir James Graham were with him to the last, and the Queen, through Prince Albert, wrote to Sir James :

We are so anxious to hear some details of the last moments of the *dear friend*, and of the state of Lady Peel and his family, that we should feel grateful if you could come for a moment, however painful the meeting must be for you.

A few days later Lord Hardinge wrote :

The decision of the Government is a ray of joy through the gloom which has made the last week the most painful of my life. It does the Queen and Lord John credit.

It must be in Westminster Abbey.

But Lady Peel and her family by her husband's wish declined the honour of a public funeral. Sir James followed his friend to the last resting-place where he chose to lie beside his father and his mother.

Among many letters on the public loss is one from Mr. Greville :

Peel's friends and family must be gratified at the unprecedented honours which are showered on his memory, and at the boundless and unusual manifestations of sorrow and respect.

I thought he had a great hold on the country, but had no idea it was so deep and strong and general as now appears. It shows how great his power was, if circumstances had ever called on him to exercise it ; and how the country would have rallied round him and supported him, if he had ever made an appeal to it.

The loss of Peel's guiding judgment was soon felt, for in the last months of 1850 the country was convulsed by what was called ' The Papal Aggression.' In September the Pope had issued a Bull establishing in England a hierarchy of bishops with territorial sees. Upon this the Prime Minister wrote to the Bishop of Durham :

I agree with you in considering the late aggression of the Pope upon Protestantism as insolent and insidious, and I therefore feel as indignant as you can do.

Passing on to denounce some of the ritualistic clergy

as 'unworthy sons of the Church of England,' he wound up in words well chosen to inflame religious passion :

I rely with confidence on the people of England, and I will not bate a jot of heart or hope so long as the glorious principles and the immortal martyrs of the Reformation shall be held in reverence by the great mass of a nation which looks with contempt on the mummeries of superstition, and with scorn at the laborious efforts which are now making to confine the intellect and enslave the soul.

This fiery manifesto Lord John, as was his wont, sent forth without consulting his colleagues. Greville's Journal records the effects :

November 10.—John Russell's letter on one hand has filled with stupid and fanatical enthusiasm all the Protestant bigots, and stimulated their rage ; and on the other it has irritated to madness all the zealous Catholics, and grieved, shocked, and offended even the most moderate and reasonable. All wise and prudent men perceive this, and strongly disapprove of his letter ; all his colleagues with whom I have spoken do so, and Clarendon writes me word that the effect it has produced in Ireland is not to be told.

November 21.—The whole country is up ; meetings everywhere, addresses to Bishops, addresses to the Queen, speeches, letters, articles, all pouring forth from the press with a vehemence and a universality such as I never saw before. The Queen takes a great interest, but she is more against the Puseyites than the Catholics. She disapproves of Lord John's letter.

December 11.—I resolved to write a letter, which was published in *The Times*, signed 'Carolus,' for I did not venture to put my own name to it. Graham came to town yesterday, on his way to Windsor. His opinions are precisely like my own, and he has written a letter to Howard of Greystoke exactly in the same spirit. He is not only very sensible but very bold on the subject, and quite prepared to confront public opinion in defence of the principles of religious liberty.

I hinted to him that his joining the Government would not be disagreeable. He said he could not be a party to any measures savouring of religious persecution or even of restriction.

Graham's letter to Mr. Howard follows :

NETHERBY, *November 23, 1850.*

It would give me cordial satisfaction to co-operate with you on any public occasion in this county. But although I am a sincere Protestant, and resent the haughty tone assumed by the Pope in his Bull, and by Cardinal Wiseman in his pastoral letter, yet I am unwilling to join in the No-Popery cry, or to ask for the revival of penal laws, or for any new enactment which might fetter the Roman Catholics in the full and proper exercise of their religious discipline within the realm.

When I supported Emancipation, I knew that the Roman Catholics acknowledged papal supremacy, and would be guided in all spiritual matters by Bulls from Rome. I knew also that their religion is episcopal, and when I fought on their side for perfect equality of civil rights I was aware that the Pope might nominate in England, as in Ireland, archbishops and bishops. I did not attach much importance to the safeguard proposed by the Duke of Wellington, who did not himself place much reliance on it—that the popish hierarchy so nominated should not assume the titles of English or of Irish sees occupied by Protestant prelates.

I myself was a party to the recognition by statute of the dignity of Roman Catholic archbishops and bishops in Ireland. I proposed in the House of Commons on behalf of Sir Robert Peel's Government the remission of the penalties which attached to receiving Bulls or other similar instruments from Rome ; and out of office I supported Lord John Russell's measure, which authorises the renewal of diplomatic intercourse with the Roman Pontiff.

I took these steps deliberately, and I do not regret them. I believe them to have been necessary for the good government of Ireland, and I cannot believe that it will be possible to have one law for England and

another for Ireland with respect to Roman Catholic discipline and worship.

I am offended indeed by the arrogance and folly of the language which the Pope and his Cardinal have thought fit to employ in announcing an ecclesiastical arrangement which I believe to be lawful, which I do not consider dangerous. But my displeasure will not induce me to treat the religion of seven millions of my countrymen with disrespect, or to contemplate for one moment the reversal of a policy which, in defiance of the No-Popery cry, I have supported throughout my public life.

I have thus written to you without reserve my genuine sentiments. I am aware that they are not popular; I do not wish to obtrude them on public attention. The subject will in some shape probably be brought under the notice of the House of Commons, and there in my place in Parliament it may be my duty to declare the feelings and the opinions which I entertain. In the meantime I am desirous to avoid any premature or hasty pledge in a matter of such paramount importance, and I am more anxious to extinguish than to add to the flame of religious strife.

In sending a copy of this to Sidney Herbert, who had asked for his advice, Sir James Graham adds :

Lord John's letter was hasty, intemperate, and ill-advised. He sought to catch some fleeting popularity at the expense of the principles of his political life; and in his eagerness to strike a blow at "Gladstonism" he forgot that the "superstitious mummeries" which he enumerates are part of the creed of one-half of the British Army, and of eight millions of his fellow-subjects. The task of governing this nation is difficult enough without aggravating it by such imprudence. Consolidation of the Union with Ireland has been the grand object of the greatest men of the last half-century, and it is melancholy to see it defeated by the rashness of a day. I am told that Stanley approves the letter, the indiscretion, and the whole proceeding. This adoption does not convince me that the course taken is wise.

A few days later Greville writes to Graham :

I did not know the extent to which the prevailing madness had gone. What think you of the head master of Rugby School, who is a son of Goulburn, putting his name at the head of a memorial to Clanricarde to remove a letter-carrier because he is a Roman Catholic ?

¹ Even the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, while warmly approving Graham's spirit of tolerance, was of opinion that from motives of policy 'something must be done.'

From Lord Clarendon

VICEREGAL LODGE, *December 18, 1850.*

I am extremely obliged to you for having, at the request of Carolus [Greville], allowed me to see your excellent reasons for not signing the requisition. I concur in them *ab imo corde*, and rejoice—though I never doubted—that religious toleration will have your powerful and consistent advocacy.

The principles you have always supported will have to pass through another ordeal, and may require to be again firmly asserted, but I cannot believe that they will run any real danger ; for John Bull, though he abhors Popery from his soul, has no desire to persecute Papists, and before Parliament meets I hope he will calm down, and reflect that penal enactments are not in the spirit of the age.

In presence of this organised agitation, and suffering under unpopularity incurred by fidelity to his principles of toleration, Sir James Graham must have missed daily the sound judgment, dauntless courage, and full sympathy of his departed leader. No doubt he valued all the more a communication made to him at this time by the Trustees of the Peel Papers.

From Lord Mahon

GROSVENOR PLACE, *December 14, 1850.*

I send you, with Cardwell's concurrence, a copy of

that closing passage in Sir Robert Peel's MS. Memoirs which I mentioned to you, and which you will I am sure be pleased to have, and to lay by among your own papers.

[Enclosure]

One word before I bring my task to a final close.

In the course of this Memoir I have acknowledged the deep obligation which I owe the colleagues with whom I acted in the administration of public affairs, and those in particular who were united with me in the service of the Crown after the failure of Lord John Russell's attempt to form a Government.

But I should do injustice to one of those colleagues, with whom from the nature of our respective offices my intercourse in regard to the transactions which form the subject matter of this Memoir was the most frequent and the most intimate, and whose responsibility was equal to my own, if I did not express in the strongest terms my grateful acknowledgments for the zealous support and able assistance which I uniformly received from Sir James Graham.

The correspondence which I maintained with him—whenever there was not the opportunity of daily personal intercourse—during the whole period of our official connection, contains ample proof of the unreserved confidence which subsisted between us, and of the obligation which I owe to him for that cordial co-operation which is the most valuable and most effectual when it is prompted by warm feelings of personal regard.

Sir James Graham has had his full share of the obloquy with which I have been assailed, and I close this Memoir in the hope that the evidence incorporated with it may serve to rescue his name as well as my own from some degree of unjust accusation and unmerited reproach.

ROBERT PEEL.

Sir James Graham had made it a chief duty to offer any consolation in his power to the widow and family of his most intimate friend. On July 24 Mr. Frederick Peel had written to him :

Lady Peel begged me to ask you to pay her a visit at Marble Hill some day before she leaves England, if it would not be very inconvenient to you to do so. She thinks it would be a relief to her to see you.

Sir James of course gladly complied with this request, and later in the year he went again to see her. She writes :

December 18, 1850.

Your visit to me last week, as you passed through town, gratified me more than I can express ; though I felt my courage fail me, and I could scarcely say how glad I was to see you again.

That visit brought before me the keen memory of the bright, the happy past, and, too bitterly, the gloomy desolation of the present—

For darkness those bright places fills
Where once there shone the sunniest ray.

This is so, and I must submit to the will of God. It is my duty, my anxious endeavour. My God has said He will never leave me or forsake me ; but—as the Psalmist writes—when I would comfort me against sorrow, ‘ my heart is faint within me.’

My Eliza and I were very sensible of the kindness of your expressions and manner to us.

The reply from Sir James is given in full in the Peel Papers. Having witnessed her deep distress he wrote with fullest sympathy :

The attempt to offer you any consolation is vain, excepting always the recollection of the past faithful discharge of your duties, and the sure hope that these afflictions which it is so hard to bear are dispensations of the Father of all mercies, who uses them as the means of weaning us from this world and preparing us for a better.

You will, I know, strive, in patient and humble submission to the Divine decree, to elevate your thoughts

and hopes above this passing scene of sorrow and of care ; and setting your affections on things above you will obtain your great reward, and be reunited in eternal bliss, as I trust and hope, to him who has been taken from you to be with Christ, which is far better.

I venture to write thus as your husband's friend. I think that this is the consolation which he would bid you seek. While it pleases God to prolong your life, you still have most important duties to perform, and for the sake of him who is gone you will strive to discharge them faithfully.

With your permission, as soon as I return to London I shall call on you again, and I hope to be allowed to see you frequently. I will make no empty professions, but I can say that from my heart I pity you, and there is no service that I can render to you or to your children which I shall not regard as a debt due to the memory of one whom I remember with reverence and sincere affection.

CHAPTER VI

1851

Graham counselled to write History—Declines to lead the Conservative Party in the Commons—Opposes Lord John Russell's Ecclesiastical Titles Bill—Opposes Disraeli's Protectionist Motion—Whigs, defeated by Radicals, resign—Stanley declines Office—Attempt to unite Whigs and Peelites—Stanley tries to enlist Peelites—Whigs return to Office—Whig Overtures to Graham.

EARLY in 1851 Mr. Cornewall Lewis suggested to Sir James Graham that he should turn to account his leisure, his opportunities, and his special qualifications, to write a history, for which he predicted an eager welcome.

January 27.—As I have said before, I wish I could tempt you to follow Lord Campbell's example, who employed his recess from judicial labours in writing history.

You have advantages which very few people in a generation possess—complete independence, command of your leisure, means of obtaining access to documents, knowledge of men and politics, experience of the working of our Government in all its branches, from the Court to the Board of Guardians, and pretty copious habits of composition, of arranging facts, and deducing causes. All these put together would enable you to treat the modern history of this country in its relations with the Continent in a manner very different from such a shallow writer as Alison, whose work nevertheless has been pre-eminently successful, and has from the nature of its subject been read wherever the English language extend.

But Graham had claims upon his time more urgent than writing history.

The first year of the new half-century was the first also in which Peel's followers had to act in Parliament without Peel; and many were on the watch to see what action would be taken by the statesman who had been Sir Robert's second in command.

The final rupture on the Corn Laws between followers of Peel and Tories of the old school had placed Graham in a difficult position. His experience with Stanley in 1834 had inclined him never again to form a third party. But of the two great parties how could he join either?

From Protectionists he was divided by their resentment of the part he had played in repealing the Corn Law, but much more by their desire to undo Peel's and Graham's work, to reimpose a tax on corn, and meanwhile to compensate landowners.

The Whigs still bore him ill-will for having left them in 1834, and for having often since assailed them without mercy. And they too had designs that he was bound to oppose.

In politics, however, memories of past service or disservice count for less than hopes of future aid. Therefore overtures came to him from both sides.

The first arrived through Lord Londonderry, who had obtained in confidence from Disraeli a letter expressing Lord Stanley's and his own desire for union with Sir James. It indicated the feasibility of arranging the lead in the Commons, and the facility of joint action in Irish and in Foreign affairs, but laid chief stress on the need for devising a policy to indemnify the classes suffering from agricultural depression.

*Mr. Disraeli to Lord Londonderry**Confidential.*

GROSVENOR GATE, January 29, 1851.

Since Monday I have had opportunities for ample conference with Lord Stanley.

You will, I am sure, learn with satisfaction that on his part no obstacle will be offered to the union which we wish, and that he has no other feelings towards Sir James Graham than those which the recollection of long years of confidence and cordial co-operation would naturally inspire.

With respect to your suggestions as to my own position, I have no hesitation in saying that I could allow no personal feeling for a moment to interfere with any arrangement which I sincerely believe to be of importance to the public welfare.

I would, however, observe that such arrangements, generally speaking, do not entirely depend upon the readiness of an individual to concur in them. It is scarcely possible for any man to lead under any circumstances a powerful party in Parliament without developing such a degree of sympathy on his behalf that his followers may not be very content that one who has sedulously represented their opinions in debate should subside to a secondary post.

The feelings of a party must be mainly influential in such an instance, and indeed every session adds to the difficulty of such an alteration as we contemplate.

I have no wish to obtrude these difficulties, for I feel persuaded that at present I could overcome them. But they nevertheless form a feature in this case which should not be omitted in our deliberations.

I agree with you that on our Irish and on our external policy a harmony of opinions seems by no means difficult. But the essential element of reconstruction still remains to be considered.

It is the conviction of Lord Stanley, which I share, that, irrespective of all other considerations and motives, it is vain to attempt to form any Government, with any prospect of vigour and endurance, which is not founded on the sympathies of powerful classes; that such sympathies might at this moment be permanently obtained

by conciliatory measures to the agricultural interest ; that the concurrence of what is called general prosperity with severe and continued agricultural depression has produced a conjunction very favourable to such measures ; that the agricultural classes at this moment are prepared to receive less than they once required, and the community in general to grant more ; that there is a very prevalent and growing feeling that the land has been badly used ; and that a temperate and well-matured conclusion of the controversy between town and country would meet with very general acceptance, because it has been for some time very generally expected.

I have already indicated to you, in my letters from Hughenden, the two measures which, after much inquiry and observation, and long and anxious consideration, appear to us to be suited to the circumstances of the case, and by no means disqualified to obtain public concurrence. But it is the object, and not the means, which interests Lord Stanley, and if Sir James Graham shares our general view on the subject, and is equally desirous to obtain the meditated result, Lord Stanley would listen with the utmost deference and willingness to any suggestions on his part which may otherwise accomplish the common purpose.

I have expressed to you, my dear lord, the views of Lord Stanley without reserve, for frankness especially suits the present occasion. The state of business renders it desirable that if an understanding can be arrived at, it should not be delayed.

In reply to Lord Londonderry, Sir James Graham in courteous terms declined to negotiate with so old a friend as Lord Stanley otherwise than directly. He feared that an inseparable obstacle to their acting together would be found in what he took to be the very bond of union in Stanley's party, the policy of Protection. At the same time, admitting that in the end his choice must lie between the two great parties, he disclaimed any wish to lead a third.

*To Lord Londonderry**Private and Confidential.*NETHERBY, *January 31, 1851.*

I am quite certain that you have made no use of any confidential communications which your sense of public duty and of private friendship does not fully justify.

Mr. Disraeli, however, has misapprehended what passed between you and me, if he has been led to believe that I sought an opportunity of resuming my political connection with Lord Stanley.

My intimacy with Lord Stanley has been unfortunately interrupted. But the terms on which we lived together for nearly twenty years, and on which we even parted, were such that I could not allow any other person to interpret to him my feelings and opinions. When I wish to communicate them to Lord Stanley, I shall ask his permission to state them for myself. At the present moment I have no such desire. I fear that the policy of Protection, on which Lord Stanley insists, is an inseparable barrier between us. The assertion of this policy is the bond of his party, and I cannot subscribe to it.

I hasten, therefore, to return to you Mr. Disraeli's letter. It can lead to no consequences, and we must take our different lines as if it had not been written. I hope, however, that Mr. Disraeli will be assured that I have never wished to supplant him in the lead of the Protectionist party in the House of Commons, which he has won by his superior abilities.

It is most true that in my opinion more than two parties cannot long co-exist in Parliament, and that one or other of these two must govern. If I were a candidate for office, I should act on this maxim, and, sinking all minor differences, I should at once make my choice. But the effects of the disruption of 1846 have not yet subsided, and the part which I have taken in public affairs both then and subsequently justifies me in pausing before I contract any new obligations.

I have neither the ability nor the wish to occupy the commanding position of the late Sir Robert Peel. I do not presume to give advice to others ; I have not courted any following ; I have carefully abstained from all cabals and private negotiations.

On the question of Papal Aggression I did indeed make known my sentiments to the Government through a private friend six weeks ago, while the course to be taken by them was still open. But I have no knowledge whatever of their intentions, and I shall enter the House of Commons unfettered by any engagement with any party, and free to take the line which sense of public duty may prescribe.

A few days later business in Parliament began with the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill—a futile attempt to restrain the Pope from reorganising in territorial dioceses the purely voluntary congregations of Roman Catholics throughout England and Wales. Ireland had already territorial Catholic bishops, some of whom had been named as such in an Act of Parliament to serve on a Commission for Charitable Bequests. Against the extension of similar toleration to England there was an outburst of Protestant remonstrance.

In Parliament the so-called ‘Papal Aggression’ divided opinion sharply, but most unequally. On the one side Sir Robert Inglis, Lord Stanley, and Lord John Russell combined to fan the flame of popular indignation. In unwonted unison, Inglis denounced the Pope’s Act as ‘an insolent pretension’; Stanley, as ‘insolent aggression’; Russell, as ‘an insult to the Crown, an interference with the rights of the Established Church, and an attack upon the spiritual independence of the nation.’

Graham, on the contrary, with other followers of Peel, true to his life-long faith in religious liberty, opposed the Bill as retrograde, intolerant, and impotent except for evil.

Soon followed the endeavour of the Protectionists to obtain compensation for cheapened food. Mr. Disraeli moved that it was the duty of Her Majesty’s Ministers

to introduce such measures as might be most effectual for the relief of the severe distress existing among the owners and occupiers of land.

Against this proposal Sir James Graham spoke out boldly :

I come to the conclusion that the object of the hon. gentleman and his party is to turn out the present Administration, to dissolve the Parliament, to return to Protection, and to reimpose a duty upon corn.

It is clear to me that the opponents of Protection must prepare for a severe conflict. They must stand to their arms, close their ranks, and make ready for a firm resistance.

There is one point to which I would advert, but my tongue almost refuses to utter what my feelings dictate. The author and champion of that policy which I think it is the tendency of this motion to reverse has been withdrawn from us. He has ceased from his labours, and is at rest. But although dead, he still speaks.

Well do I remember the memorable words that closed the magnificent speech which he delivered last session. 'I earnestly hope,' he said, 'that I may never live to see the day when the House of Commons will retrace its steps.'

He is gone. My voice is feeble, and my power insignificant, but, sir, my part is taken. I hold it to be my sacred duty to defend that policy to the best of my ability ; and as an earnest of my firm determination I shall give my unhesitating vote against this motion.

The time has arrived when the price of corn must be left to find its natural level. For any Government or for any Legislature artificially and by power of law to enhance it the day has gone by.

There is not a ploughboy who plods his weary way on the heaviest clay in England who does not feel his position improved within the last three years, and he knows the reason why. There is not a shepherd on the most distant hills of Scotland who does not now have daily a cheaper and a larger mess of porridge than he ever had before, and he also knows the reason why.

There is not a weaver in the humblest cottage in Lancashire who has not fuller and cheaper meals, without any fall in his wages, and he knows the reason why.

I entreat my honourable friends who sit below me to be on their guard. You may convulse the country, you may endanger property, you may shake our institutions to the foundation, but of this I am satisfied—there is no power in England which can permanently enhance by force of laws the price of bread.

Of this resolute utterance at a moment critical for free trade in corn Stanley wrote to Malmesbury : ‘Graham was very bitter, but very telling.’

With Graham’s aid the Whigs escaped defeat. But the reprieve was short. Their Budget was ill received, and shortly afterwards, on a Radical motion for assimilating the county to the borough franchise, deserted by the Tories, they were beaten in a thin House by 100 to 52, and thereupon resigned.

By their advice the Queen sent for Lord Stanley, but Stanley, almost despairing now of any Peelite alliance, and feeling himself not strong enough without it, advised that an attempt should first be made to form a Coalition Government of Whigs with followers of Peel.

The Queen accordingly called on the two Peelite leaders, Aberdeen and Graham, and they held a conference with Lord John Russell, but could not come to terms.¹

Things were not ripe yet for the Coalition, which took place next year. The chief obstacle was Lord John Russell’s Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, which the Whigs were pledged to carry, the Peelites to oppose. According to Mr. Gladstone this difficulty was urged by Graham more than by Aberdeen.²

¹ For details see Walpole’s *Life of Lord John Russell*, ii. 123.

² Morley’s *Gladstone*, i. 405.

The task was thus thrown back on Stanley, who in vain tried to enlist two Peelites—Gladstone, who had just come back from Italy, and Lord Canning. They both declined, and so the weak Whig Government returned to place.

In reviewing afterwards what had passed, Lord Stanley offended many of his own followers by describing them as ‘a party, numerous no doubt, but which contains hardly an individual of political experience and versed in official business.’ To the Peelites he referred as ‘a third party, not very extensive numerically, but most important as regards the official experience and the talents of a great portion of its members.’ Such being the case, he expressed with much bitterness his opinion that they were ‘resolved to use their great ability and influence only to prevent the formation of any strong Government.’

On Graham’s attitude during these negotiations some further light is thrown by the diary of Greville, whose statements, however, should be read with caution, being often abandoned by himself on obtaining better information. He writes :

February 24.—Graham of late has talked to me with considerable openness. He said that his joining the Government now could be of no use to them ; he should only involve himself in, without averting, their fate.

February 25.—The negotiations broke off on the Papal question, though John Russell was willing to make some concessions. I don’t think Graham wished to complete any combination ; he preferred throwing the thing back on Stanley.

March 2.—The speeches of Aberdeen and Graham showed that any coalition is out of the question, and nothing will induce them to be parties to the Papal Bill. I think them too stiff on this question.

March 4.—The Queen thinks John Russell might have done more to obtain Graham and the Peelites. But Granville says she is heart and soul with the Peelites, so strong is the old influence of Sir Robert.

March 8.—Graham satisfied me of the impracticability of his supporting and defending—as he must have done—any [anti-Papal] measure. If he could have got over this there still remained the great difficulty of Palmerston. Graham was satisfied that he and Palmerston would have speedily disagreed.

March 10.—Lord John Russell told Graham that last year Palmerston strongly urged him to get Graham to join them and take office. This is curious enough.

March 24.—Walpole said to Graham, ‘The only thing would be for you and Lord Stanley to shut yourselves up in a room together, when you might come to an understanding.’ Graham replied, ‘It is impossible. Lord Stanley is a man of honour, and he must, if he comes into power, propose a duty on corn.’

September 23.—Graham was informed that all the Cabinet concurred in the offer, and wished him to join them.

During the prolonged crisis Sir James Graham received the following letters :

From Lord Brougham

Well, here is a kettle of fish ! I have the utmost indignation against Wiseman, whose doing it all is, and against whom all respectable and rational Roman Catholics are furious. It is Wiseman who for his own vanity, which his friends call ambition, has misled the Pope his master. However, J. R.’s is an incredible blunder. My notion is that if anything be done, the less the better. I am sure anything like the frenzy I never did see. It is more like 1650 than 1850.

From Lord Ellenborough

4, AUDLEY SQUARE, *February 21, 1851.*

If you are endeavouring to form a Government, you will be counting votes, and you may count mine—that

is, I will give you all the support I can. And I say this on the supposition that Lord John retires, and I must add in the hope that you will have as few Whigs as possible.

If Lord Lansdowne will not continue to lead the House of Lords, I recommend you to take Granville. He has not yet committed a fault, and he will conduct the business in a very acceptable manner to the House, which generally respects him.

From the Duke of Newcastle

CLUMBER, February 23, 1851.

So the crash has come! I hear Stanley is trying to form a Government, and is anxious to throw over Protection.

I do most earnestly hope that none of our friends will be caught by such a bait. Those who take office under Stanley at this moment must, and will, be considered as renegades to our commercial policy. The known opinions of the head of the Government must ever give the character to his Administration.

I would make any sacrifice which would really serve the Queen and the country at this critical moment, but a Coalition would deprive us of all our usefulness, and leave the Queen eventually with no sincere friends to fall back upon.

Self-denial and a generous abnegation of all considerations but honour and patriotism are the great and distinguished duties which now devolve upon us. If we act together calmly and wisely, we may do much good. One false step would be fatal.

Pray, pray, restrain the too ardent and little reflecting spirits.

From Lord John Russell

February 25, 1851.

Lord Stanley has not yet undertaken to form a Government, but has promised to give a formal answer to-morrow.

I conclude he will form a Government—such a one as England has not seen since the days of Charles II.

The Duke of Wellington thinks Lord Stanley's attempt absurd, and that he will not go to the country on the dangerous question of the price of bread.

From Lord Carlisle

February 26, 1851.

It is a great pleasure to me to think that we are likely to be near each other among the enemy, though for the sake of the ship I should like to have seen you nearer the helm.

From the West Country Lord Duncan reported a flattering demand for Sir James Graham's services as a financier :

February 28, 1851.—I yesterday attended one of the largest and most respectable meetings ever held in Bath, the Mayor (a Conservative) in the chair. There were many Tories, Conservatives, Whigs and Radicals present, and all the leading persons in the city. The meeting was convened before the late Ministers went out of office, to denounce the Budget. The universal cry in the mouth of every man in the meeting was, 'We must have Sir James Graham to manage the finances of the country : in his own words, "it is round him that we must close up our ranks."' I never saw so much feeling displayed, and to a certain extent Bath influences opinion in the towns in the West of England.

Lord de Grey, characteristically, sent Graham prompt notice that after voting for the Roman Catholics he must no longer count on his support.

March 1, 1851.—I regret very much to read the uncompromising tenor of your opinion upon the Papal question, and, though I am not going to argue the question, it is fair to yourself to state how strongly I differ with you ; because, if any turn of the political tables should place you under the necessity of vacating your seat, as forming part of a Government intending

to act with the same views you profess—and I feel assured you will act with none other—I am sorry to say that it would not be in my power to assist you.

I do not suppose that this would influence your conduct in such an emergency, but I have felt it fair and candid to you to announce my feelings—within an hour of reading your speech—in order to prevent the most remote chance of your being under erroneous impressions.

Sir James with dignity replied :

To Earl de Grey

When you proposed that I should stand for Ripon, the understanding between us was express—that I must not expect to be returned a second time, but that while I held the seat I was at perfect liberty to exercise an independent judgment on every question which might arise.

My recollection of what passed between us is not less distinct than grateful. I am not therefore surprised by your announcement that my future return for Ripon is impossible.

I am sorry that you dissent from the opinions which I have declared respecting the impolicy of the proposed legislation on the Papal question. We will not enter into controversy. But, before I stood for Ripon, I had carried through the House of Commons, on behalf of Peel's Government, the Maynooth Endowment Act, and the Bequests Act. The policy which dictated those measures is, as I think, irreconcilable with the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill now under consideration.

From another old friend, a supporter on the hustings at Hull, where first he publicly took his stand for toleration, he received a gratifying acknowledgment of his consistent conduct, and of its results.

From Mr. Charles Langdale

March 10, 1851.

Since your generous declaration in favour of religious liberty, amidst all the painful dereliction of its principles

from those who have long professed themselves its firmest supporters, I have frequently meditated a personal expression of a Catholic's gratitude. But now that the penal Bill has almost ceased to be more than a Parliamentary protest, I cannot but offer my acknowledgments to you, as being in my opinion a principal cause of the abandonment of its more mischievous character.

I must express my gratification—after so long a suspended intercourse—that such an occasion should have enabled me to express my sincere admiration for your noble and disinterested advocacy of the sacred rights of conscience.

Much of the session was wasted on the Anti-Papal Bill, which passed, but not with ease. Ably led by Graham, the minority against it in the Commons grew to more than a hundred, though popular clamour ran strong in its favour. At last it became law, but in a mutilated form. Roman Catholics defied it with impunity. No Government ever ventured to enforce it, and after twenty years of idle existence on the Statute Book it was by general consent repealed.

In explanations on the ministerial crisis Lord John Russell expressed satisfaction in having renewed with Graham the terms of friendship on which they had been united in the Government of Lord Grey; and Sir James, reciprocating the assurance of good-will, expressed regret that one obstacle alone had made it impossible for them at present to act together.

Thus encouraged, Lord John renewed his overtures, but in a somewhat formal memorandum.

September 12, 1851.—Lord John Russell is desirous of obtaining the assistance of Sir James Graham in carrying on the Government. He is of opinion that the abilities and experience of Sir James Graham would in an official

position materially strengthen this Administration, and benefit the public service.

At this time, when the measures for the next session have yet to be considered, little need be said. It is believed that on the great questions of Free Trade, of a continuance of the Income Tax, of Extension of the Suffrage on the basis of the Reform Bill, and of Public Education, and measures relating to the Church, Sir James Graham agrees in principle with the present Government. On one question a material difference of opinion has arisen between them. But the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill has been passed, and is now an Act of Parliament. No occasion has yet occurred for putting it in execution. If such occasion should occur, it is only necessary to say that the whole question—whether the supposed infraction were to take place in England or in Ireland—would be submitted to the Cabinet. In coming to an opinion they would be guided by their known opinions and convictions in favour of religious liberty on the one hand, and their determination to uphold the independence of the Crown and nation on the other.

Mr. George Lewis is empowered to give any further explanation Sir James Graham might desire. If those explanations should be generally satisfactory, Lord John Russell will be glad to meet Sir James Graham at any time which may suit their mutual convenience.

With this memorandum, supported by a letter from Prince Albert, Mr. Lewis went down to Netherby, and did his best to remove difficulties, but in vain. He writes to Lord John :

Sir James entered very fully into his objections, which I discussed with him in detail. . . . His decision was, so far as I could judge, principally determined by his personal position with regard to members of the present Cabinet, as well as to Sir Robert Peel's late party.

He likewise adverted to his speech at Glasgow in 1839, and read me a passage in it containing an opinion that the members of Lord Grey's Cabinet ought not to propose alterations of the Reform Act. He was ready to

entertain such a proposition if made by the Government, but he seemed to hesitate about belonging to a Government which was to initiate the proposal.

Graham's written answer was as follows :

NETHERBY, *September 20, 1851.*

Sir James Graham highly values the friendly disposition which induces Lord John Russell to desire his accession to the existing Administration.

On questions of Trade, of Finance, of Public Education, and of Church Government no difference of principle precludes Sir James Graham from entertaining the proposal.

The contemplated measure of an Extension of the Suffrage opens a question of primary importance. Sir James Graham has already declared in the House of Commons that he no longer contends for the 'finality' of the Reform Act. He thinks, however, that the authors of that great and salutary change incur peculiar responsibilities when *they* propose its extension. It is certain that a measure of this nature tendered to Parliament by the Ministers of the Queen cannot be successfully resisted ; it is not so certain that in its progress it may not be carried much farther than the original design. This risk is seriously increased by the support which has been given to vote by ballot by the principal Law Officers of the Crown, by Officers of Her Majesty's Household, and by many members of the Administration, without any sign of disapprobation from the head of the Government. It will not be possible to prevent the repetition of these votes, when the new Reform Bill comes under discussion.

Sir James Graham is not prepared to partake of the responsibility of the Cabinet in encountering evils which have their origin in the recorded votes of members of the Administration.

It is true that the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill is now an Act of Parliament, and it must be carried into operation by the Executive Government.

Sir James Graham's principal objection to the measure was that in Ireland it would probably be violated ; if permitted to remain inoperative, the authority of law

would be brought into contempt ; if attempted to be executed, it would prove either abortive or pregnant with fatal consequences. Subsequent events have not shaken these forebodings, and the pledges given to Parliament by Lord John Russell and by the Lord Chancellor—that ‘ further measures ’ of repression would be proposed by the Government if the Ecclesiastical Titles Act were not effectual—will in all probability be vigorously exacted, and must be redeemed.

Sir James Graham cordially thanks Lord John Russell for the friendly spirit which has directed his proposal, and for the frankness of the explanations which Mr. George Lewis, under the authority of Lord John Russell, has most freely given. It appears that Lord John Russell does not seek a reconstruction of the Cabinet, but the acceptance by Sir James Graham of a single office.

Sir James Graham’s long acquaintance with Lord John Russell, and early habits of official intercourse and confidence, would render more intimate union between them personally easy and agreeable. But the question is, What is most conducive to the public good, and to the most effective co-operation and concord in the service of the Queen ?

Sir James Graham has come to the conclusion that, in present circumstances, and in the manner proposed, his acceptance of Lord John’s offer would not effect those public objects. He therefore respectfully declines the proposal.

The single office tendered was the Presidency of the Board of Control, a post of exceptional importance at the time from the necessity for reconsidering the position of the East India Company on the expiration of their charter. It was added that the War Office, with a seat in the Cabinet, might soon be available for Graham’s friend Cardwell, and the Under Secretaryship of State for the Colonies could be given to Mr. Frederick Peel.

During the recess several letters show how vigilantly Sir James at this time watched over important questions

of National Defence, of Law Reform, and of further Parliamentary Reform.

From Lord Hardinge

October 30, 1851.

The more I look into the subject, the more I am convinced that we are in a most perilous condition, if France has the audacity and courage to make a vigorous and bold attempt to march to London.

Whatever I write I will send to you in the first instance, for I know no man in whose judgment I have greater reliance ; and you, my dear Graham, are no fair-weather friend. At all times and seasons you have assisted and supported me, and all that I shall request you to do is to point out errors, which your administrative powers will detect without difficulty.

To Mr. Bouverie

Private.

NETHERBY, November 19, 1851.

I have hitherto abstained from pressing you with respect to the Reports of the Committees on Fees of Courts of Law and Equity.

You presided over that inquiry in a most efficient manner ; you are master of the whole subject ; flagrant abuses were brought to light ; they were denounced in our Reports in no measured terms—and no legislative remedy has been applied.

The useless trappings of the Great Seal have not been curtailed ; an infinite variety of fees, many of them for needless work, are still exacted from the suitors ; and all the abominations of the Ecclesiastical Courts still offend the nostrils, even of bystanders.

These things ought not so to be, when you are in possession of power, and know both the extent of the evil and the necessary remedies.

Be assured that honourable fame may be won in this field, and I should be glad that the larger share fell to the lot of you and your colleagues.

I cannot, however, allow this matter to rest.

The best intelligence which I can receive will be the assurance from you that you have taken it in hand, and

you may rely on every support and assistance that I can give.

If you cannot give me this assurance, then I must consider what is the best mode in which the whole case can be submitted to the judgment of Parliament.

To Mr. Lewis

November 30.—I see that the Radicals are prepared to treat as ‘a sham’ every Reform of Parliament which is not based on vote by Ballot.

Coppock’s revelations, and the St. Albans disclosures, will whet the appetite for this change, which you consider harmless, but which in conjunction with a large extension of the suffrage has hitherto been regarded as inconsistent with kingly government.

I know not how this may be. But, if the Queen’s Ministers give way before it, who will be so hardy as to resist it, and fight the battle of the monarchy against the trusty servants of the Crown?

Occupet extremos scabies.¹ In revolutionary movements it is not wise to lag behind.

If we are to have another Revolution—for such Lord John himself considered the last Reform Act to be—it will be necessary to bear this in mind. When the measure is once launched, the time for prudence will have gone by.

Remember what I told you, that a large measure of disfranchisement will be inevitable from the moment when a new settlement of the representative system is recommended from the throne. Calne, Morpeth, Maldon, Tavistock, will not again be spared. And when you shall have largely disfranchised, then will arise the question, How are you to redistribute the representation? A war of classes and interests will commence, the end of which I cannot foresee.

To Mr. Greville

NETHERBY, December 1, 1851.

I retain my opinion that disfranchisement on a large scale is inevitable, and with respect to the consequences

¹ A murrain seize the hindmost.

I do not differ from you. These risks should have been calculated and carefully considered before the announcement of a new Reform Bill.

You seem to have heard that Sir Robert Peel said Lord John was right when he made this announcement three years ago. I had much confidential intercourse with Sir Robert Peel on this subject, and, whatever casual expressions may have fallen from him, I am sure that such was not his deliberate opinion. He certainly believed that Lord John would never resign power without trying his hand at a second Reform Bill ; indeed, when the original Act passed, he predicted that its authors would be foremost in the desire to alter it. I do not believe that he considered Lord John's avowal of a distant intention to revise the Reform Act a prudent measure. He may have admitted that after such an avowal the execution of the undertaking was unavoidable.

From Mr. Greville

December 3, 1851.

What you said to me about Peel satisfies me that the report of his approbation of John's declaration for Reform is a recent invention. I well remember long ago hearing that he had said, 'After Lord John's making such a declaration in the House of Commons, he ought to carry it out, and must do so.' But I did not hear at that time that he ever said he ought to make the declaration, and I don't believe he ever did so.

To Mr. Greville

December 8, 1851.

I wish to add one word as to Peel's alleged approval of Lord John's announcement of a new Reform Bill in 1848.

Lord John, I know, says that after having made his speech he crossed the House, and, entering into conversation with Peel, obtained from him an admission that he concurred in the policy of Lord John's declaration.

I have implicit reliance on the accuracy of Lord John's statement of facts, and since he makes this assertion I cannot contradict it. But much will depend on the use

of words, and some allowance is to be made on the score of courtesy, when a First Minister seeks the opinion of an old opponent on the merits of a speech just delivered by himself. The ability of the speech may have been commended, when the prudence and the policy of its contents were doubted.

At all events I am quite sure that a very short interval for reflection led Peel to the conclusion that a great indiscretion had been committed when the Queen's Minister announced the intention of making a change of this nature which was not to take effect until a distant date, and in circumstances which could not be foreseen.

The strongest evidence, I am satisfied, exists that such was Peel's deliberate opinion.

When Frederick Peel consulted me before his acceptance of office, this very point with regard to the conversation between Lord John and his father in 1848 was discussed between us, and I told him what I now tell you.

December 15.—I well remember your portrait of George Bentinck. It was drawn by a master hand.

CHAPTER VII

1851-52

Coup d'état in France—'The Best Thing' or 'an Outrage'?—Dismissal of Palmerston—Granville Foreign Secretary—Greville's Account—Graham's Comments—Seat offered for County Cork—Declined—Overtures from Lord John Russell declined—Lord John resigns—Lord Derby succeeds—Election for Carlisle—Separation from Gladstone—Overture from Roebuck declined.

A NEW chapter of history was now opened by Louis Napoleon's dramatic '*Coup d'état* of the Second December.'

In England this divided opinion sharply. Palmerston hailed it as 'the best thing,'¹ Graham condemned it as 'an outrage.'

Tidings of it came to him fresh from Greville, who saw messages to the Cabinet arriving hourly by the submarine cable, then new.

December 3, 1851.—Louis Napoleon has eclipsed Palmerston. We live on the electric telegraph and the news from Paris every hour.

Madame de Lieven wrote on Sunday [December 1] that Guizot and the Moderates were engaged in patching up a compromise between the President and the majority, and she thought they would succeed, 'le Président avait l'air de s'y prêter.'

¹ 'The sum and substance of what I had said to Walewski was, that I thought what the President had done was the best thing for France, and through France for the rest of Europe.'—Ashley's *Palmerston*, i. 312.

It was only an air, and he was deceiving them. So far he is quite successful, but how will it end? To propose Bonaparte's old 'constitution de l'an 8'—which hardly gave the semblance, and none of the reality, of liberty—seems a hazardous measure, with every man of ability, character, and position in France dead against him.

To Mr. Greville

December 5, 1851.

If the French nation submit to this outrage without a struggle, political experience, learning, eloquence, law, liberty are at a discount, and brute force and military despotism are in the ascendant.

From Lord Aberdeen

The President has left his uncle far behind, not only in the perfection of his duplicity, but in lawlessness and violence.

From Mr. Greville

December 17, 1851.

Is it not curious that, while Palmerston cannot tolerate anything like arbitrary conduct or despotic government in Germany or Italy, and lectures everybody for not being liberal enough, he is quite delighted with Louis Napoleon, and stands up for all he has done?

Of this paradox Palmerston gives his explanation in a private letter to the British Ambassador.

December 3.—As to respect for law and Constitution, it is scarcely a proper application of these feelings to require them to be directed to the day-before-yesterday tomfoolery which the scatter-brained heads of Marrast and Tocqueville invented for the torment and perplexity of the French nation; and I must say that the Constitution was more honoured by the breach than by the observance. It was high time to get rid of such childish nonsense.¹

¹ Ashley's *Palmerston*, i. 291.

To Hardinge Graham writes :

December 19.—I hear that Palmerston is well pleased with the military despotism established at Paris.

I consider him the master spirit of the present Administration. Lord John has been driven to succumb to him, and cannot now assert his supremacy without breaking up the Government.

Palmerston is a very able man ; a formidable enemy, but an unsafe friend. His predominant influence is the rock on which Lord John's Administration will be stranded.

A forecast soon to be fulfilled ; but for a moment Lord John got the upper hand.

From Mr. Greville

Private and Confidential.

December 22, 1851.

I will disclose to you an event which will make an indescribable sensation all over Europe. Palmerston is out, irretrievably out ! and the offer of the Foreign Office is on its way to Clarendon, who I take it is sure to accept. I tell you this in the strictest confidence, and to you only.

December 23.—The Foreign Office was offered to Clarendon, and he has refused it ! My astonishment and disappointment are extreme. I cannot understand it. For every reason, personal and political, he wished to quit Ireland. The greatest post is offered to him, and he is afraid to accept it !

No time has been lost, and Granville is appointed. He has ventured to accept, with full consciousness of the weight thrown upon him ; he musters his resolution, and will do his best.

This has been a most extraordinary affair. Johnny has acted with great dexterity, resolution, and decision.

He may say, ' Alone I did it.' Not one of his colleagues had a notion of what was in preparation, not one knew what the Cabinet was called for, nor, till they were assembled and found Palmerston was not there, had they a suspicion that the Foreign Office was vacant.

I look with impatience for the explosion of opinion

all over the world, when the prodigious intelligence is made known. Figure to yourself the joy of the Queen !

Sir James Graham's reflections on the new situation were imparted to Lord Aberdeen.

December 25.—The long postponement of this wise and necessary decision has been unfortunate. The state of parties and of affairs would have been widely different if it had been taken earlier. But even now it appears to me to make a great change in the probable course of events ; and no blow could have been struck in England at this moment which would produce the same sensation throughout Europe.

We shall see what Palmerston will do. The Protectionists and the Radicals both want a leader, and either course is open to him. The timely precaution of declaring adherence to a fixed duty on corn, which so greatly commanded the praise of Disraeli, is a passport to the camp of Lord Derby, while Kossuth and Mazzini will proclaim him the victim to their cause. *The Times* is wrong in supposing that we have seen or heard the last of Palmerston. He will be bent on revenge.

All the consequences of this great event cannot be foreseen. The fall of Palmerston and the rise of Louis Napoleon form a bold relief to the column which history will erect in memory of this December 1851.

As regards any bearing of the change on his own position—in answer to a letter from Lord Aberdeen, hoping he may see his way to accept a rumoured invitation to take the place of Sir George Grey—Graham writes :

You tell me you hear from London that I am going to the Home Office. Since the embassy of Lewis nothing whatever has passed between me and the Government.

You saw the Memorandum in which I declined Lord John's offer ; and the ground on which I made my stand, both with respect to Ballot and to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, will render a renewal of the negotiation all but impossible.

It is true that in my conversations with Lewis I insisted principally on my objections to Palmerston—his crooked policy, his headstrong waywardness, and his dangerous artifices. These obstacles to a better understanding are now removed, but the change has been effected too late. I do not anticipate any fresh overture on the part of Lord John ; but of this you may be certain, that if it be made, you shall hear of it at once from me.

Lord Derby, after a silence of five years, wrote to me a kind letter a few days ago about a trifle quite unconnected with politics [a request to buy for him two good-looking and well-bred polled Galloway cows], but the tone was friendly, and I answered it in the same spirit. This circumstance may be quite accidental and unimportant, but I mention it because at this juncture his handwriting took me by surprise.

Sir James had replied to Lord Derby :

I was sincerely glad to see your handwriting again, and there is no act of kindness within my power which I would not readily perform where you are concerned. Every proof of friendly recollection from Knowsley is most acceptable to me.

To Greville he wrote :

December 25.—I rejoice in Lord Granville's appointment. His manners are perfect, his address most winning, his powers in debate every day improving. I am confident that he will be found a faithful colleague and an able Minister, competent to fill the high office which he now holds in a manner most conciliatory to our foreign allies, which is quite compatible with the strictest regard to British interests.

From Mr. Greville

December 27.—I showed your letter to Granville, who is of course much gratified by your good opinion.

December 29.—I do not feel able to give a clear and connected account of the late rupture, but I will try to

put it before you in a compendious form, and you must take it, like a merchant's account, with 'errors excepted.'

You know all that passed about the reception of Kossuth, and the Islington deputation and speeches. Upon this latter affair a correspondence took place between John and Pam; the former remonstrated, the latter defended himself. The Queen resented it, but in the end it was patched up by their affecting to believe Palmerston's denials, and his promising to behave better for the future. They were afraid to face Kossuth and anti-Austrian excitement, and to cast him on Radical support, against what would have been called 'foreign interference' and 'slavish submission to Russia and Austria.' So the storm passed over, and he remained as usual 'immortal and unchanged.'

Then came the French *coup d'état*, when without consulting anybody he expressed to Walewski his unqualified approbation of the President's acts. This Walewski instantly wrote to Turgot.

Meanwhile Normanby [the British Ambassador], who had given offence to the President by language of an unfriendly character, wrote home for instructions. At a Cabinet it was determined that he should be instructed to express no opinion, and to take a reserved but not unfriendly attitude—one, in short, of perfect neutrality, taking no part and waiting to see the result—and Palmerston was to write to him in that sense.

This resolution was taken down to the Queen at Osborne, after which the Ministers separated. Soon after Normanby wrote to John Russell in great indignation, complaining of the usage he had received from Palmerston, who had written him a strong letter rebuking him for his language, and hinting that the President would most likely ask for his recall. At the same time Normanby informed Lord John that Turgot had shown him Walewski's despatch conveying Palmerston's entire approbation.

In addition to this the remonstrance of the three Cabinets [Austria, Germany, and Russia] about the refugees [Kossuth, etc.] was presented to Palmerston, who put it in his pocket, and never said a word to anybody about it.

On receiving these accounts from Normanby Lord John Russell thought it time to finish with Palmerston, went off to the Queen, and settled it. He then wrote him a letter, asking for explanations, informing him that the Queen was greatly displeased, and desired to place the Foreign Office in other hands ; that he agreed with Her Majesty, thought he had acted with indiscretion, and besides he was tired of these perpetual difficulties.

Palmerston sent word he was ready to resign his office, but defended his conduct ; principally on the ground that his conversation with Walewski did not commit the Government, he only spoke his own sentiments, and they were qualified and conditional.

No excuse was likely to be taken, even if it had been a better one ; it was clear that when John wrote such a letter he meant to throw away the scabbard.

Accordingly the thing was done. John offered him Ireland and a peerage, which he refused.

John then put himself in communication with Clarendon, and gave him to understand he should propose him to the Cabinet, and if he would not take the seals should propose to Granville.

Clarendon made all sorts of objections—not to my mind valid ones. On the Sunday John wrote him word definitely that he should propose him on Monday, and he might expect an offer the next day ; and it was so settled at the Cabinet. But it was not done.

The next day, Tuesday, John received Clarendon's reply, again urging objections, and saying they had better take Granville ; but if they thought it necessary he would accept. This was taken as a refusal. The Foreign Office was offered to Granville, and he instantly accepted it.

The Court evidently were bent on having Granville.

This last remark is confirmed by a letter from Mr. Lewis :

December 29.—Granville has become a great favourite with the Prince, in consequence of the clever and obliging manner in which he transacted the business connected with the Crystal Palace. I suspect that his appointment was much desired at Windsor.

A letter from Ireland gives what purports to be the Lord Lieutenant's own account of his refusal.

From Mr. Brewster

DUBLIN, *December 30, 1851.*

Lord Clarendon is anxious to make his statement known. It is that Lord John wrote to offer him the Foreign Office, but he declined it, on the ground that Lord Palmerston had long accused him of caballing for his overthrow; that he wished to refute the calumny, and therefore declined the office, but that if the public service imperatively demanded him he would be prepared at a moment's warning.

Lord Granville had not hesitated for a moment.

From Mr. Greville

December 30, 1851.

I never saw anything like Granville's delight with his office, and he anticipates no trouble in any quarter.

For three hours on Sunday he was with Palmerston, who was excessively cordial and obliging, told him everything he could think of, and gave him both information and advice. Nothing could be more admirable and becoming in all ways. He spoke of the Court with great moderation, and highly of the Queen's sagacity.

The explanations will be matter of difficulty and delicacy, for it will be impossible to give the real or the whole case. It will be curious to see how these adroit old politicians will fence with each other.

Lord John will have his reward in finding himself for the first time really at the head of his own Government, and every department under his own control.

In the new year Sir James Graham's comments are continued to Mr. Lewis.

January 2, 1852.—You know my opinion of Palmerston, and of his conduct both towards his colleagues and towards our allies throughout Europe. I was not

therefore so much surprised at his dismissal as at the patience which had endured so long.

I see that our friend Cassagnac has become the great champion of Louis Napoleon. With his knowledge of France and of her revolutions, does he really believe that she will consent to be governed by brute force and in mute silence, to the exclusion of all talent, whether civil or military, from any participation in power? This might be possible under the despotism of a conqueror; but the yoke of an adventurer, when panic has subsided, cannot long be borne by a gallant people.

My fear is that he will pander to their vainglory by aggressive war, and that before the spell be broken we shall be involved in the fray.

A forecast to be noted. Mr. Lewis replied :

Your horoscope of Louis Napoleon exactly coincides with mine. I am very glad to be confirmed by your authority, as I have found that all the wise men to whom I had talked on the subject took a different view.

As regards political prospects at home Sir James writes to Lady Graham :

LONDON, *January 8, 1852.*

I saw Greville last night. I think that Lord John will make up his mind to-day to meet Parliament, but without much hope of long surviving the commencement of the session. The quarrel with Palmerston daily becomes more envenomed on both sides.

January 9.—I saw Lewis this morning. He brought me something like a message from Lord John, expressing a wish to see me on the day before the meeting of Parliament, that he might make known to me his plan of Parliamentary Reform. I gave no encouragement to this invitation. The quarrel between him and Lord Palmerston is a very angry one. Many of the Whigs side with Lord Palmerston, and I do not think that Lord John can long survive the meeting.

January 10.—There is a lull in the political world. Johnny has failed to get any assistance, and must try

his fortunes in Parliament with his present Cabinet. It is called 'The Dukery'; the accession from Clumber and Inverary would have made the sobriquet complete.

I think that Clarendon is not well pleased with Granville's promotion. Pam, I believe, will come out a high Protestant in concert with Ashley. Lady Granville is to have Wednesdays, Lady Palmerston will continue her Saturdays. The rival camps under hostile standards will thus be pitched.

Sir James Graham had still to find a seat for the next Parliament. Offers came from sundry quarters; one from Ireland, in recognition of his courage in opposing the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.

From Mr. G. B. Roche, M.P.

January 9, 1852.

I am much concerned to see by the papers that the prospect of your taking office is likely to be foiled by a difficulty in securing your return to Parliament.

Under these circumstances I shall be glad to resign my seat for the County Cork, and return you in my place. The sacrifice will be amply repaid by the reflection that I have been the means of securing to Ireland the services of one who so well knows how to serve her.

Sir James replied :

I cannot sufficiently thank you for the generosity and frankness of your letter.

Lord John Russell has not recently made to me any offer of admission into his Cabinet. The political world is much agitated at this moment by rumours without foundation. I cannot regret them with respect to myself, since they have obtained for me so substantial a proof of your confidence and goodwill. I am proud of it, and most grateful. But I hope that you may long continue the representative of the County of Cork.

At all events we shall meet as two independent members at the commencement of the approaching eventful

session ; and I never can forget your most disinterested offer, which I do not value less because I am not in need of it. I beg you to accept my cordial thanks.

Palmerston being gone, the session did not begin without fresh overtures from the Whigs to Graham, which, however, led to no definite result.

From Lord John Russell

. DOWNING STREET, *January 14, 1852.*

I should be much obliged if you would let me have some conversation with you on the state of the Government. I should wish Lord Lansdowne to be with me.

To Lord John Russell

NETHERBY, *January 15, 1852.*

The meeting of Parliament is now so near at hand that your measures and course of proceeding must probably be settled, and it is now, I fear, too late for me to offer an opinion. I do not like the air of untimely interference with counsels to which I have been a stranger, and which cannot now be changed. On the other hand, when you tell me that you wish to see me, and to unite me in consultation with Lord Lansdowne, in circumstances of public difficulty, I am unwilling to refuse compliance with your request. If therefore on further deliberation you think an interview desirable, I will meet you at the time and place which may be most convenient to you and to Lord Lansdowne.

From Lord John Russell

DOWNING STREET, *January 17, 1852.*

I am very much obliged to you for your letter. I feel the difficulty of inviting you to share a responsibility which you could not undertake without adopting at all events all the great lines of our proposed measures. I will therefore not open to you the propositions I had to make, and not give you the trouble of coming to town.

To this Graham replied :

I think that your decision to avoid official communication with me in present circumstances is judicious. It is always open to you to confer with me confidentially as an old colleague, and you will not find me unfriendly or reserved.

By accident, both statesmen being invited to Windsor Castle, they did meet, and offers were made, but for the present declined. They included Mr. Cardwell, who writes :

WHITEHALL GARDENS, *January 26, 1852.*

On my return from Oxford I found your note, and one from Lord John Russell to appoint an interview.

He referred to his conversation with you, and said you saw difficulties between you as regarded the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, and also Reform.

I told him I wished to see a better understanding between him and yourself ; that Sir Robert Peel had in a most touching passage spoken of you in such a way as to point you out among his colleagues in the House of Commons as the legatee of his opinions ; that I thought the public, though ignorant of these circumstances, had arrived at the same conclusion, and that I was particularly identified by them also with Sir Robert Peel's memory.

He said Bouverie told him 'you liked to be able to deal with questions without being fettered by a connection with Government, etc.'

I told him I did not agree with Bouverie. I said your tone to me, as regarded Lord John personally, was always friendly.

In short, what passed was not without an *arrière pensée*, understood, I conceive, on both sides. The offer made to me was single. I declined it on the ground that it was so. The wider base was in perspective, but not directly in debate.

He wished to know if you were in town, and I could see you. He also said he would prefer my deliberating till to-morrow. I said there was no need of deliberation.

Graham, in reply, pronounced the interview to have been satisfactory.

Your refusal in present circumstances appears to me to have been judicious. It is useless to add new materials to a tottering wall; reconstruction is best commenced in these cases by pulling down, and Lord John, though slow to learn this lesson, will be driven to it at last. You omitted nothing which it was desirable to have said to him, and you left him exactly under the impressions which I have endeavoured to produce.

The Duke of Newcastle has created great alarm at Windsor by his tone on Church matters. I am afraid that the Clumber party has given a great advantage to Lord John by exciting serious apprehensions on a subject concerning which the Sovereign and the great body of the people are entirely agreed.

I am glad that you and I stand on the same ground. With the assistance of Lord Aberdeen, if this Administration be overthrown, some arrangement may be possible between Lord John on the one hand and the Clumber party on the other. But the combination of Puseyism with politics must be renounced.

We must endeavour to support Lord John when we can do so honestly, to resist him manfully, but not offensively, when we think him wrong. His friendly advances now made both to you and to me render this course both easy and decorous.

In the chaos of parties speculations were rife as to possible combinations. Greville writes :

January 27.—Lyndhurst tells me Derby is willing and able to form an Administration. Suppose they abandon Protection—not at all unlikely—what is to prevent Gladstone, Herbert, and Newcastle from joining them? That would do. Perhaps Canning would then take the Foreign Office, and who knows if even Palmerston would not join, with lead of the House of Commons? But without the two last Derby and Gladstone might manage it. Two-thirds of the ‘Janissaries’¹ would join them.

¹ The body-guard of the Sultans of Turkey. Bentinck’s name for steady supporters of Peel.

The experiment was soon tried. The Whig Government could not have stood, as it had now stood, for five and a half years, without the aid both of Peel's friends and of Palmerston. Palmerston's was now withdrawn. 'Bent on revenge' he gave the 'tottering wall' a push, and it fell.

It was on February 20 that Palmerston carried an amendment on a Government Militia Bill. The majority was small, but Lord John took it to mean want of confidence, and resigned. Lord Derby at once formed a Government, whose attitude towards Free Trade was ambiguous. In Lincolnshire one of them, Mr. Christopher, told the electors he had accepted office from a conviction that it was Lord Derby's sincere desire 'to reverse in a new Parliament that policy which had proved so injurious to native industry and capital.' In Buckinghamshire Mr. Disraeli, in general terms, promised 'those remedial measures which great productive interests suffering from unequal taxation have a right to demand.' In the Commons, while maintaining that in the opinion of Ministers 'very great injustice had been done to the agricultural and other interests in 1846,' he announced that they were not pledged to any specific measure of redress, and that no proposal could be made until the verdict of the country had been obtained.

To the Lords the Prime Minister held similar language. 'The next election must finally decide, at once and for ever, the great question of our commercial policy.'

Thus hopes were raised, and apprehensions, of an attempt to reverse Peel's policy of free imports. But all hung on the promise of Ministers that they would present a clear issue at a general election.

Meanwhile they took in hand some necessary work.

In considering the urgent question of National Defences, the new Home Secretary, Mr. Walpole, had access to a 'secret and most confidential' paper on that question, left by Sir James Graham in 1846 in charge of his successor at the Home Office, Sir George Grey.

In thanking Sir James warmly for 'the sight of so valuable a document, when he had to consider so difficult a subject,' Mr. Walpole asked permission to show it also to the Prime Minister.

Sir James replied :

For twenty years of my life I had not a thought concealed from Lord Derby, and the paper in question was written when I was his colleague.

On every ground, therefore, public as well as private, as First Minister and as an old friend, Lord Derby has a right to know what was my recorded opinion on the subject of National Defences when I was officially responsible.

Thus the personal relations of Sir James Graham with the new Government were not unkind. But politically it became clear to him that if—as Cardwell had written—effect were to be given in the House of Commons to those principles which had guided the Administration of Sir Robert Peel, it could not be—as Gladstone hoped—through the party who had refused to follow Peel, and who, if they had the power, had the will to reverse the financial and commercial policy which had brought so much prosperity to the realm.

If, therefore, this great question was to be referred to the constituencies, Graham was determined that his trumpet should give no uncertain sound.

But where was he to fight the battle? As regards one invitation he writes to Mr. Gladstone :

March 11, 1852.—It is not my intention to stand again for Ripon, and I have made no effort to obtain a seat in the next Parliament. Mr. — does not clearly indicate the place to which his friendly wishes and anticipations refer. If that place be Liverpool, the Free Trade policy of Sir Robert Peel, which it is my first desire to defend, cannot be more efficiently advocated than by Mr. Cardwell, and I would not on any account take any step or entertain any proposal which might in the least degree endanger the security of his seat.

Meanwhile the question had been raised in Carlisle whether it was possible to return two Free Trade members, and Sir James Graham had been consulted on the subject. He gave his advice, he said, freely, because ‘he had no personal interest in the question.’ He writes to Mr. Mounsey :

January 27.—Although I am gratified by your communication, which proves that some of my old constituents still regard me, towards the close of my political life, with undiminished favour, I am not prepared to embark in a contest for Carlisle.

You must make your arrangements without the least reference to me. I have not sought for a seat in the next Parliament ; I know not that any one will be open to me. It is enough, at my age, to tender my services, if my countrymen require them.

It was not till near the end of March that the feeling in Carlisle for their old member, notwithstanding what he had written, became so strong that he received a requisition to become one of two Free Trade candidates, the other of course being a Liberal of more advanced views. In response to this, he undertook to address the electors, and did so with great effect. He began with words that at once propitiated his audience—‘ Well, gentlemen, the wanderer has returned.’ Without more

direct reference to his former relations with them, he recalled to them his votes for Catholic Emancipation and Abolition of Slavery, and his share in the preparation and passing of the Reform Bill, in the establishment of Municipal Self-government, in the creation of County Courts, in Chancery Reform, and in Colonial Reform. Above all, he dwelt on having 'contributed, with his departed friend Sir Robert Peel, to supply the people with cheap food, and repeal the duties on raw materials of manufacture; thus lowering the price of food and clothing to the poor and needy.'

For the maintenance of that policy, he was prepared, as Peel had been prepared, to make a resolute stand. As to Parliamentary Reform—large as had been the measure of 1832, and pledged though Earl Grey's Cabinet were to rest content with it—after the lapse of twenty years Graham was willing to revise the Act, and while he must oppose vote by Ballot, he was prepared for further extension of the franchise.

All this was well received in Carlisle, but otherwise in London, by 'the Gladstonian subdivision or main body of the Peelites.'¹

Between them and Graham some divergence had been shown already by their selecting seats on the Opposition side 'below the gangway,' while Graham and Cardwell had seen no reason why they should not sit on the front Opposition bench near Lord John Russell. But when, in addition to this, Graham came out at Carlisle supported by his old friends the Blue party, and in responding to their cordial welcome home was carried a little farther perhaps than he had intended, it was more than Gladstone could in silence bear.

¹ Morley's *Gladstone*, i. 420.

He read the speech, in *The Morning Chronicle*, 'with discomfort and surprise,' and wrote at once to inquire of Graham 'whether, on the whole, your expressions are accurately reported, or whether at any rate their spirit and effect are rendered with fidelity.' He adds :

If the report be a just one, and if then, you standing with these declarations for the City of Carlisle, and I standing such as I am for the University of Oxford, party connection were to continue to subsist between us, I think you, with your usual frankness, will allow that the Derby candidates at the ensuing election would not exhibit the only or the most conspicuous antitype of your amusing figure of Screw and the Artful Dodger.

In any case believe me to remain, with undiminished warmth of personal regard,

Always and sincerely yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

Two more letters complete this correspondence.

To Mr. Gladstone

March 29, 1852.

The report is taken from an adverse local paper. The two first passages marked by you are in substance correct ; the last passage respecting Ballot, as spoken by me, was a stronger and less hesitating declaration against secret voting than the words as reported convey. On the whole, however, that is my speech, and my opinion, as matters now stand.

You will remember that I have never presumed to sway the judgment or to influence the counsels of my former colleagues in the Government of Sir Robert Peel.

I have always felt that my age and position were different from theirs ; that the habits and connections of my early political life, though broken, gave to me a bias which to them was not congenial ; and since the death of our great master and friend I have always feared that the time might arrive when we must separate.

You intimate the decision that party connection must

no longer subsist between us. I submit to your decision with regret ; but at parting I hope you will retain towards me some feelings of esteem and regard, such as I can never cease to entertain towards you ; and, though political friendships are shortlived, having known each other well, we shall continue, I trust, to maintain kindly relations.

It is a pleasure to me to remember that we have no cause of complaint against each other.

From Mr. Gladstone

March 30.—I am unwilling to mix with the deep regrets of the present moment anything in the nature of disputation ; when the only object for which it could possibly have been useful has become hopeless. I content myself therefore, so far as this is concerned, with simply recording the opinion I entertain, that the ‘decision’ to which you refer was really conveyed by the speech at Carlisle.

This note has a purpose more grateful to me, to thank you for the unvarying kindness of many years, to acknowledge all the advantages I have derived from communication with you, to accept and re-echo cordially your expressions of goodwill, and to convey the fervent hope that no act or word of mine may ever tend to impair those sentiments in my mind, or in yours.

All will accept Mr. Morley’s comment, that ‘the temporary parting was conducted with a degree of good feeling that is a pattern for such occasions in politics.’

Whose decision it was that party connection must cease is another question, on which opinions may differ. Mr. Gladstone consulted with the Duke of Newcastle, Goulburn, and Lord Aberdeen. All three opposed his first wish that Lord Aberdeen should go at once and tell a meeting of Peel’s friends ‘how they stood upon Graham’s speech.’ All three, according to Mr. Gladstone, joined in an instruction to a Whip of the

party that he should tell any one who might come that 'they looked upon their political connection with Graham as dissolved.'

But Lord Aberdeen's understanding of what passed was less severe than Mr. Gladstone's.

Also, if the report from 'an adverse local paper' had caused any doubt, in Carlisle or in London, as to Sir James Graham's attitude towards Reform, it was removed by a letter from him defining on what terms alone he would consent to stand.

To Mr. G. G. Mounsey

April 11, 1852.

My conditions are that I do not canvass ; that I spend no money beyond what is strictly legal ; and that no pledges are exacted from me as to my political conduct.

As to Free Trade my opinions are express and unquestionable. As to Reform, I was one of the authors of the great measure of 1832, and I have admitted that it must be revised, in consequence of the introduction of Lord John's Bill. I am opposed to Ballot and to Triennial Parliaments. But no revision of the franchise can be in my opinion satisfactory which does not provide for its extension both in counties and cities. In cities continued residence and rating for a fixed period appear to me as at present advised the best basis on which an extension of the franchise can be safely rested.

But a new Reform Bill is not now before Parliament. The matter at issue is Free Trade or Protection.

The growth of friendly relations at this time between Russell and Graham is shown by the following letters :

From Lord John Russell

June 26, 1852.

I could not express to you at the time the pleasure you gave me by taking my defence against the host of critics who assailed me. It is sometimes very dispiriting,

when one's only motive is to improve the laws and effect a public benefit, to receive nothing but abuse and detraction, and since George Grey has been absent I have been constantly left undefended when assailed.

To Lord John Russell

I am glad when it is in my power to say or do anything which is agreeable to you.

You have no reason to be pained by the puny attacks of malevolence and detraction. The services which you have rendered to your country are memorable and lasting ; envy may do its worst, but your fame will live in history.

The past is well stored, it is beyond the reach of fortune ; the future is dark and uncertain, but your principles will lead you right, and will sustain your character, whether official power be granted or withheld.

My hope is that henceforth our communications may always be friendly and unreserved.

Sir James Graham was returned for Carlisle at the head of the poll, and received many letters of congratulation, among them one from his nephew, Lord Dufferin.

I have read your speech, and I have made my mother read it, and a nobler and more touching one no faithful servant of the country has ever made from any hustings.

Although perhaps amid the storm and contest of your public life more of the shouts of your enemies have reached your ears than of the thanks and blessings of those for whom you fought, and whose cause you have made triumphant, yet I am certain in the after-time men will feel and acknowledge how much you have wrought for the good of England, and how generously and how bravely you have served the people.

From Mr. Greville

I was glad to see your election go off so easily, but sad havoc has been made of the Peelites.

The fate of the rejected Peelites was not shared by Peel's son, who had acted on Graham's counsel.

From Mr. Frederick Peel

The contest at Bury has ended most fortunately for my interests, and I feel how much I am indebted to you for the advice and encouragement you gave me to accept the offer of its representation.

Mr. Gladstone also retained his seat, but not without a fight, and, as his biographer notes, 'not as a Liberal.' Of that, however, Graham, in his kind felicitations, takes no notice.

To Mr. Gladstone

I cannot deny myself the pleasure of congratulating you and Alma Mater on your triumphant return. I am glad that this Bucolic has been brought to so innocent an end. The Warden of Merton may again give his undivided attention to the Hebdomadal Board, and may return to quiet enjoyment.

*Fortunate senex, hic inter flumina nota
Et fontes sacros frigis captabis opacum.*

But your hands are greatly strengthened by this victory for the coming fray.

This chapter, including as it does the temporary severance from Mr. Gladstone and his few followers, may be fitly closed by letters from and to Mr. Roebuck, a politician who took pride in his independence of political parties. His overture to Graham, and Graham's frank and definite reply to it, may help to show more clearly what was his personal position in the crisis caused by the General Election of 1852.

From Mr. Roebuck

LEEDS, July 20, 1852.

To you I look to be the leader of the Liberal party in the coming Parliament. Lord John will never again unite us, take my word for this. Lord Palmerston,

though popular, wants the support of the sedate portion of politicians. You would, I believe, gain after a while general support.

I know that some difficulties lie in your path, but with your ability and power over the House of Commons those difficulties can be overcome. Let me be frank, and put my finger upon what I really believe will alone stand in your way, I mean seriously. You will not dare enough. If you will have courage, and put confidence in the good sense and good feeling of your countrymen, you may guide us all for many years to come. . . .

The first great question will be the extent of the suffrage in any future Reform Bill. . . . My own confidence in the people is so great as to make me ready to acquiesce in granting the widest suffrage, but I am prepared to take one much narrower than I believe will be eventually obtained.

The next great difficulty is the Ballot, and any Liberal Ministry which hopes to retain power must leave this question open—they need go no further.

Regarding commercial reforms and law reforms there will be no difficulty or disagreement. I fancy I should have no difficulty in making you agree with me even in my schemes of colonial rule.

The chief rock ahead is the Church, and more especially the Church in Ireland ; but in practical questions agreement even here might be attained.

When you proposed your plan of education in the factories, I stood by you spite of the Dissenters, spite also of my own belief that you had not selected the wisest plan.

Now then for the first practical step.

There ought to be a meeting before the meeting of Parliament. By this I mean not a meeting of everybody, but of a select few, such a number as might frame a plan after discussion—decide upon a programme upon which to appeal to the country. These persons so meeting ought to be selected from all shades of liberal opinions ; a spirit of narrow or family cliquism would ruin all.

Now can you not be the great Commoner ? I am not in the habit of saying flattering things, and I hope you will believe me sincere when I say that I really think

the great part is now within your grasp, that you have the requisite mental powers to perform it, and if you will pluck up courage and essay it, you will succeed.

As to the result of the elections I am not myself sanguine. Free Trade is safe, but Lord Derby may be safe also. If so, we must act as an Opposition. Let us act as a combined Opposition, under a leader who will vigorously guide and support us. Be you that leader.

To Mr. Roebuck

NETHERBY, *July 21, 1852.*

I am always gratified by very friendly communications which you address to me, because I rely on your sincerity, and value highly your abilities and truth.

On this occasion I think you wrong in two particulars. You underrate the importance of your own position in the House of Commons, and you overrate the influence which I possess. We will not, however, discuss either of these points; they rest on opinion, which is variable, and they ought not to affect public conduct proceeding on fixed principles, which are immutable.

My desire is earnest and sincere to see the Liberal Party in the new House of Commons firmly united and acting in concert; and I would gladly contribute all the aid in my power to reconcile differences, and to secure an effective and honest combination. But personal jealousies and antipathies are rife, and there is at the present moment no general concurrence of common interests strong enough to counteract these baneful influences.

I am not swayed by any such passions, but I cannot conceal from myself the truth that I am not the person who could assuage them in others.

The terms which subsist between Lord John Russell and me are friendly; he knows my opinions generally on the present state of affairs, and my remembrance of his past public services obliterates the recollection of bygone differences. I believe that he and I are mutually disposed to act cordially together in opposition to Lord Derby's Government; to secure and to extend the operation of Free Trade; to enlarge the Suffrage; to promote Education; to check nomination and corrupt

influences at elections ; and to improve the administration of justice by the amendment of the law. These are noble objects, for which good men may honestly combine, though they may differ as to the precise extent to which they would carry Reform, if they possessed power. Such general agreement is sufficient for an Opposition : but not for the formation of a Government.

For my part I infinitely prefer a good and united Opposition to a weak and divided Government ; and I believe that greater advantages may be gradually and safely won for the public by the exercise of power without office than by the possession of office without power.

Be this, however, as it may, in the present temper of parties no more can now be done than to come to an agreement on the course to be adopted when Parliament meets ; and for this purpose I am most anxious that communications should be opened among the chiefs of different sections which concur in opposing Lord Derby's Government.

I am disposed to think with you that Free Trade is quite safe, and probably that Lord Derby is in no immediate danger. The duties, then, of an Opposition are those for which we must be prepared ; and, as in administration the liberties of the people must be promoted, so in opposition the principles of good government must be respected.

But once for all I declare that I cannot be 'the great Commoner,' or 'the leader.' Circumstances forbid it, into which I cannot enter. While I remain in the House of Commons I shall labour to the best of my ability to serve the public faithfully : I seek no pre-eminence ; I have no object of personal ambition.

The friendly tone of your letter merits an answer without reserve, and I have given it. No retrograde movement is possible ; I have no anxiety on that head. The general march of good government is certain, whatever may be the head which directs it. I am quite content with my station in the ranks.

CHAPTER VIII

1852

Graham's Policy for the new Parliament—Correspondence with Lord John Russell and Lord Aberdeen—How to combine Whigs, Peelites, Radicals, and Irish?—Russell and Graham on Ballot—Cobden and Bright—Derby, Palmerston, and Gladstone—Free Trade Motion by Villiers—Palmerston's Amendment—Accepted by the Government—Disraeli's Budget—Lord Derby resigns.

SEVERED for a while politically—whether by his own speech at Carlisle, or by the action taken upon it by Mr. Gladstone—from most of his late colleagues, Sir James Graham at this time conferred much with his old Whig ally, Lord John Russell, but most unreservedly with the chief Peelite friend who had not politically cast him off, Lord Aberdeen.

The correspondence with Lord John, by kind permission of his family, will be used here freely. Leave has been given also for extracts from Lord Aberdeen's letters, but they mostly await publication by his son, Lord Stanmore.

To Lord John Russell

NETHERBY, *July 17, 1852.*

Lord Derby will be unable to do any mischief, except by an attempt to rule without power.

The question must be raised not with respect to persons so much as with regard to measures; not only a new Administration must be formed, but a definite policy must be provided and announced.

Finance, Reform in the Representation, and National

Education are probably the groundwork on which this policy must be based.

Religion and Ballot are the stumbling-blocks which stand in the way of a general agreement.

New combinations, uniting such heterogeneous materials as those of which the Opposition will consist, cannot readily be accomplished. Yet some such attempt should be made soon after the close of the elections, when it will be evident that Lord Derby does not command a majority. If he be allowed to rule when in a minority, our representative form of government is at an end.

From Lord John Russell

THE GART, CALLANDER, *July 19, 1852.*

The questions you raise are very serious, and three months are not too much in which to consider them.

The very first thing of all is to ascertain whether Gladstone and Sidney Herbert would act with the Whigs, and whether the two could act with the Radicals.

On Free Trade we should all be agreed. On Parliamentary Reform I believe the Peelites would be disposed to go as far as I should.

I do not think I could act with Cobden or Bright in office, certainly not with the latter—on reduction of establishments we entirely differ. But with Molesworth and those like him I could very well act.

On Education I believe nothing can be done that disturbs the existing system in England. It may be extended and improved.

Now as to mode of execution, supposing a large party were agreed on these general outlines.

It might be wise to say in answer to the Speech from the Throne that the policy pursued since 1842, and especially the great measure of 1846, had been eminently beneficial, and would be the guide of our commercial policy in future.

After that, Disraeli might still bring forward his measure. I cannot imagine it can be otherwise than the greatest delusion, or such a disturbance of our whole financial system that it must be blown out of water.

*To Lord John Russell*NETHERBY, *July 22, 1852.*

Your first inquiry is, whether Gladstone and Sidney Herbert would act with the Whigs in combination with the Radicals.

You will remember Gladstone's displeasure occasioned by my coalition with a Radical at Carlisle.

The abrupt manner in which he repudiated all political connection with me has rendered our subsequent communications reserved and indirect. Herbert and I are on friendly terms, but his intimate alliance is with Gladstone. They agree not only on political, but also on religious questions, and they will act together in the strictest concert. I know nothing of the present state of their feelings and opinions, having had no intercourse with them since I left London.

The conduct of Lord Derby towards the remnant of the Peel party at the recent elections, and the open war waged against Gladstone and Herbert themselves, cannot fail to have widened the breach between them and the Government, and I have little doubt of their disposition to attack and to defeat Lord Derby.

To speak frankly I do not, however, believe that they would be found willing to serve in an Administration of which you were the head. I think that they would serve together with you as leader of the House of Commons, under some peer who by common consent might be acceptable as Prime Minister.

The general outline of measures traced in your letter might probably be regarded as satisfactory by some of the Peelites, though I suspect they will boggle at a new Reform Bill with schedules A and B. Yet without these schedules the measure would command no popular favour, and without cordial popular support no new Reform Bill can be carried.

Economy in the public expenditure, to the utmost degree consistent with the maintenance of necessary establishments, is surely a principle of good government which cannot be impugned. The question, What are necessary establishments? varies year by year with the fluctuation of our foreign relations, and with the vicissitudes of our Colonial Empire.

I have never had any intimate communications with Cobden or Bright.

I have received a letter from Roebuck within the last week, urging me to take a prominent part in concerting a combined Opposition before the meeting of Parliament. I have answered him by declaring that I am anxious to promote concert by friendly communications among the different parties of which the Opposition must be composed, but that for myself I decline any conspicuous part. I added that you and I are on friendly terms, and that you are in full possession of my opinions.

There may be strong objections to the ultimate objects supposed to be entertained in some quarters ; but surely it is not prudent on account of past differences to shut out from a new combination any one who may be willing to accede to the principles and to the measures on which the united action is for the present made dependent.

From Lord John Russell

THE GART, *July 23, 1852.*

I wrote yesterday to Lord Aberdeen, and requested him to ascertain what line Gladstone, Sidney Herbert, and the Duke of Newcastle would be inclined to take.

I told him that for my part I was ready to forego any claims of mine to office. I am perfectly ready to support a new Government of which I shall not be a member. I am not ready—I never shall be—to lead the House of Commons again for a peer Prime Minister. Great affection for Melbourne induced me to go on when I and all his colleagues were against the then existing corn laws. But I would not accept the same position again.

Besides, I should not be the best person for such an office. The Radicals, the Irish Brigade, and some of the Whigs would prefer any one else to me ; so that my personal degradation would be a sacrifice to no purpose. Whereas, if I were out of office, the new Prime Minister would be free to choose an acceptable leader for the Commons.

July 24.—George Lewis, I am sorry to see, thinks the Ballot would remedy the evils of which he complains. I am convinced it would not, but would tend to lower

the character of our people. If men are to vote secretly that they may sell their corn dear, or buy their bread cheap, our whole Government will get degraded.

Let me add my congratulations on your son's marriage. She is a charming person.¹

To Lord John Russell

July 26.—I do not believe that Ballot would be a safeguard against bribery. It is most specious and attractive as a defence against undue solicitation ; and if the cases of abuse of power and intimidation at the late elections be numerous and clearly proved, the demand for Ballot will be irresistible, however hazardous the experiment may be.

I greatly prefer a Free Trade Amendment, embracing the policy both of 1842 and 1846, to any other motion which has yet been suggested. The conflicting language used by different members of the Government on the hustings demands the assertion of this principle. It in no way impedes the production of the promised measures ; on the contrary it is a significant hint that no time must be lost in bringing them forward.

All such letters, including Roebuck's, Sir James showed to Lord Aberdeen. On Lord John's refusal to lead the House of Commons for a peer, Graham observed :

The answer is distinct and final. It is not possible to press on a gentleman what beforehand he declares to be 'personal degradation.'

In reply Lord Aberdeen warmly approved of concert with Lord John. Roebuck's letter also he regarded as 'a good sign. If the Radicals have the sense to be moderate, much might be done. Probably they are greatly divided among themselves.'

So were the Whigs. Of them Graham writes :

Tufnell told me that a great portion of the old Whig

¹ Lady Hermoine St. Maur, daughter of the Duke of Somerset.

party would not serve in a Government, or support it, if Lord John were the head. He evidently was recruiting for adherents for Lord Lansdowne.

I quietly urged the necessity of satisfying Lord John. I dwelt on his superior claims and merits as a Reformer. Tufnell was somewhat shaken, but maintained that Lord John could not at present return to power as Prime Minister.

Further light is thrown on Sir James Graham's policy by a letter to Lord Dunfermline, formerly, as Mr. Abercromby, Speaker.

To Lord Dunfermline

GROSVENOR PLACE, August 5, 1852.

The view which both Ellice and you take appears to me in the main accurate and just.

With proper care the Reform Act of 1832 might have been sufficient for our day. But after the Queen's declaration from the Throne at the opening of the last session, that this measure required revision, and after Lord John Russell's late attempt by legislation to amend it, any effort to resist change would be an absurdity ; and, if the task of revision is to be undertaken, I can be no party to a sham.

The work must proceed in good earnest, and the flagrant imperfections left untouched in 1832 must be rectified. Disfranchisement must begin anew, and a higher number of electors must be fixed as the minimum for retaining the privilege of returning members.

I prefer for boroughs the municipal franchise of residence and rating to any annual value of inhabited houses. And in redistributing rights of representation I am of opinion that regard must be had to other claims than those of numbers ; that, at the risk of introducing a new principle, station acquired by superior intelligence and industry must be favourably considered ; and that representatives must be given to Universities both new and old, possibly to the Inns of Court, and other chartered and scientific bodies, and to East India proprietors and holders of Bank Stock.

I have reason to think that the Radicals would not be averse to a compromise of this sort.

Ballot is the great stumbling-block in the way of an agreement with them. On that point they are inexorable, and public opinion is gravitating towards it. The bribery and intimidation which have disgraced many recent returns will give increased force to this popular demand.

But the Whig aristocracy will demur to the first step, and will refuse to disfranchise. I do not see, therefore, how a Government based on sound principles can be formed, even if the Opposition be strong enough to overthrow Lord Derby. The groundwork of the confederacy against him must be Reform and Progress.

It is vain to look back ; but the force of circumstances, and the acts of public men, have in the last generation broken up the foundations of party. Our Parliamentary Government has from the Revolution downwards rested on party, and it is not strange that the whole edifice should be shaken when the basis has been suddenly destroyed. It may be possible to underpin the tottering wall, but time and caution, and a master's skill, are wanted for this critical operation : and where shall they be found ?

Lord John Russell is perfectly aware of my opinions, which are very much in unison with Ellice's and with yours, and he does not materially differ from us. I am afraid that the Whig grandees will be dissentient, the Conservative Liberals alarmed, and the middle classes, now in possession of supreme power, not openly, but at heart unwilling to share it.

If so, Lord Derby will be master of the field for a time, the battle of extremes will recommence ; the end is certain, but I do not wish to see it. While I still take part in public affairs, my voice will be raised for what I consider reasonable and right ; and popular concessions such as I have glanced at appear to me in present circumstances far less dangerous than uncompromising resistance.

You may communicate this letter to Ellice, but otherwise it is only to an old friend that I could have written in confidence with such entire absence of all reserve.

To Lord Aberdeen

August 5.—Ellice has received letters from the Duke of Bedford and from Lord Melbourne. From his comments on them I collect that some scheme has been launched for a junction between Palmerston and Lord Lansdowne, to which it is hoped that the Peelites, to my exclusion, may become parties, and which will ultimately embrace a large portion of the Whig aristocracy, and many of the present supporters of Lord Derby.

The basis of this arrangement is resistance to a disfranchising Reform Bill, and the adoption of one which shall have the semblance of change with the minimum of the reality. This is not stated in terms, but I infer it from many expressions used by Ellice, who condemns the project as dangerous if not impracticable.

It appears that Lord John is a stranger to this project, and will not be included in its arrangements. The plan, so far as I can unravel it, is crude, and will come to nothing. I do not think that the Duke of Newcastle or Gladstone will be parties to a sham Reform Bill.

August 6.—I saw the Duke of Bedford this morning. It is quite true that Palmerston has opened a negotiation for placing Lord Lansdowne at the head of a Government, which would include many of the Whigs, all the Peelites willing to join, and possibly some of the Derbyites.

I scouted the notion of the possible success of this scheme. I pointed out that it could have no attractions for you and me, that it would not be acceptable to the Peelites generally, and that probably Lord John was not so anxious again to be united with Palmerston in the Queen's service as to become the supplicant of Lord Lansdowne. All this had occurred to the Duke's own mind, or when presented carried conviction, for he left my room without a doubt that the Palmerston device must be a failure.

The Duke was aware of the state of your relations with Lord John, and expressed his satisfaction. I told him that his brother and I are also on friendly terms, and he seemed glad to hear it.

To Lord Dunfermline

August 11.—On the overthrow of Lord Derby's

Government, an Anti-Reform Administration may be formed of some Whigs who are enemies to disfranchisement, of Palmerston, who always hated Reform, possibly of some Peelites who may partake of these views, and probably of many Derbyites, who dread 'the deluge.'

There will also be formed an effective Opposition, whose watchword will be Progress and Reform; and we shall arrive at new combinations and a legitimate division into two parties, by the natural course of events, which ebb and flow like the tide, between the extremes of oligarchy and of democracy. But democracy is the flood, and will prevail.

To Lord Aberdeen

I have seen Lord Clarendon and the Duke of Bedford. Clarendon's personal preference leads him to Lord John; his fear of democracy and of an efficient Reform Bill almost disposes him to regard with favour the Lansdowne transaction, and to use his influence with Lord John to become a party to it. But he sees the impossibility of reconciling Palmerston and Lord John, and he has ascertained that Palmerston will not leave the House of Commons, where he is resolved to hold and improve his ground.

I read to the Duke of Bedford my correspondence with Lord John, and the letter in which he speaks of 'personal degradation.' The Duke was glad that I had raised the point, but commended my discretion in not pushing it farther in writing.

He asked me, Who was the peer to be preferred? I answered that the Queen and Lord John must decide that question.

From Lord Aberdeen

August 15.—I have heard again from Lord John. He does not allude to the Lansdowne project, but says he is quite aware of the objections made to him as Prime Minister. He adds that, if he were to lead the House of Commons, he would be as obnoxious to the Irish and Radicals as if he filled the office of Prime Minister. He says that, if I would undertake the concern, he should be ready out of office to give me his cordial support.

To Mr. Ellice

August 17.—As matters now stand, we must await events. The interchange of friendly communications has tended to smooth personal difficulties in many quarters.

My communications with Lord John are frequent, unreserved, and friendly. What is more important, Lord Aberdeen and he are on terms of confidential intercourse, and if any combination of the Peelites and Whigs can be effected it is now in the right train.

I have more fear of Palmerston, and of that portion of the Whig aristocracy which is really hostile to Reform. Aberdeen and the Peelites are at heart much more Liberal. But any division in the Liberal ranks will render the triumph of a Tory Government certain. For my part, both by forbearance and by active exertion, no effort shall be omitted to promote concord.

From Lord John Russell

August 18.—I had George Grey here yesterday, and showed him the letters of Lord Aberdeen, the Duke of Newcastle, and Mr. Gladstone.

He came to my conclusions: that Lord Aberdeen already agrees with the Liberal party, that the Duke of Newcastle does so in all essential points, and that Mr. Gladstone is only anxious to unite with the Tories.

With respect to my own position, all I have said is that I could not be leader in the House of Commons for a peer Prime Minister.

My own plan of Reform was to take the second members from forty or fifty of the smaller boroughs, giving the seats much as you propose.

As to a Schedule A, provided it were small, I should not myself object. But the consent of the Whig party would be a *sine quâ non* with me.

I induced the party, much against their will, to agree to support Sir Robert Peel's repeal of the Corn Laws; and I rather think they would agree to a Schedule A. But if they did not, I would not propose it.

I am quite ready to support Lord Aberdeen as Prime Minister, if the Liberals prefer him to me.

To Lord Aberdeen

August 25.—In a letter from Lord John which I enclose he makes a strange admission, and avows an unexpected resolution.

The admission is that he had great difficulty in persuading the heads of the Whig party to agree to the repeal of the Corn Laws; thereby establishing the consummate skill of Peel, who would not undertake to carry that measure until he had committed the Whig party to the support of it—a precaution which now turns out to have been by no means superfluous.

The resolution which surprises me is that he will not be a party to any entire disfranchisement, even of the smallest boroughs, 'without the consent of the Whig party'!—which, being interpreted, means Calne, Arundel, and Morpeth, without the consent of Lord Lansdowne, the Duke of Norfolk, and Lord Carlisle.

From Lord John Russell

October 23.—In answer to the letter which I enclose I went to see Lord Lansdowne, and told him that personally I had no objection to serve under him, quite the reverse; that circumstances might render it the only easy solution of an entangled problem. He said that if he communicated my answer, as I desired, to Lord Palmerston, it would expose him to fresh solicitations.

So far from desponding, I am in high spirits.

From Mr. Lewis

October 25.—The Government can hardly go on long with their present cast of parts, and a junction with Palmerston, Gladstone, the Duke of Newcastle, and Sidney Herbert seems the most likely mode of giving them strength.

This, however, would amount to a complete reconstruction of the Government, and would alter its character. Lord Derby might be First Minister in name, but if Palmerston were to lead the House of Commons he would in fact guide the policy of the Government. He would be the real Prime Minister.

Neither he nor Lord John will give way to the other.

He would make a very good War Minister, but he increases the difficulty of preserving peace.

I am told that the [Irish] Brigade intend that *you* should be their leader.

To Lord John Russell

October 30.—Lord Aberdeen does not believe that Gladstone and the Peelites are prepared to join Lord Derby. But he thinks that the Government will make up their minds to adopt Peel's policy, and to declare it ! 'After this a junction would be possible.'

I suspect that Gladstone's eager desire to carry a Free Trade Amendment is a wish to secure this very possibility. It is the removal of the barrier which separates him from Lord Derby.

Palmerston would prefer the Lansdowne arrangement. But failing this he would join Lord Derby rather than remain much longer out of office.

The Duke of Newcastle is a Reformer, and has views and objects of his own, with strong Liberal tendencies, and has no affinity to Lord Derby. Sidney Herbert will be much perplexed if Gladstone and the Duke part company.

Palmerston, I think, is anxious to carry Gladstone and Herbert with him to either camp.

Joe Hume and Cobden on the one hand, and the Irish Brigade on the other, render the confusion in the state of parties ludicrously complete. The ball will open with a country-dance in which no one has secured a partner.

Your courage and gaiety are undeniable, when in the midst of all this you have no fears, and your spirits do not droop.

From Mr. Gladstone Sir James Graham had received a friendly acknowledgment of congratulations on his re-election for Oxford.

July 30.—I am afraid you must have set me down as an ingrate, but I am at present imperfectly represented in London by a housemaid ; thence it is that your most kind letter has only just reached me.

It leads me away from subjects of care, thought, and contention, to pleasant recollections of the long train of kindnesses which I have ever received from you, and which I hope always as now to reciprocate with cordial attachment and regard, whether in these difficult times I may be able to follow in your footsteps or not.

I see you consider that the Government should be allowed to produce their measures, in which I agree.

It has of course become my special duty to study that very formidable-looking blue book which has summed up the labours of the Oxford University Commission; and a most laborious study it is, but at the same time one of the deepest interest. The University is a little world, and has its history as complete and as complex in all departments. This one feels most of all when the question is about reforming it. I wish I could hope that you would have time to give your mind to the subject. With the invitation I have supplied the warning.

So far as I have yet got, I think the Report one of the ablest productions submitted within my recollection to Parliament, but the proposals of change too manifold and complicated.

The move to be taken on the Address was now matured.

From Lord John Russell

August 25.—Mr. Gladstone is of opinion that if we are not invited in the Address to deliver an opinion on the recent commercial policy, we ought to have an amendment for that purpose. Mr. Cobden tells Charles Villiers that if I do not take this course, he will.

Much will depend on the Irish Brigade. If they wait to see what Disraeli will bring them, they will decline to vote for a Free Trade motion. If they would prefer you and Lord Aberdeen to Derby, they would support you if *you* were to make such a motion. Can you ascertain?

To Lord John Russell

September 1.—I still think that the discordant speeches

of Ministers at their elections render an assertion of principle necessary ; and an amendment may be so framed as to make it difficult for any honest Free Trader not to support it, yet impossible for Ministers to treat it as a vote of want of confidence. This double object should be kept steadily in view, both in wording the amendment and in selecting the person by whom it is to be moved.

I do not think that either you or I should make the motion. I incline to the opinion that it would best be made by Charles Villiers, who is entitled to precedence on account of the consistent and prominent part he took in advocating Repeal of the Corn Laws.

I have no safe or direct means of access to the Irish Brigade.

The best thing would be general concurrence in an arrangement to wait on the Government, to watch their movement, and to compel an early and full disclosure of their financial and commercial policy, making no Opposition motion so long as it can be avoided.

If this concurrence be not possible, the next best thing is an Amendment to be moved on the Address by Charles Villiers, affirming the policy of 1842 and of 1846, but carefully avoiding any declaration of want of confidence.

To Lord Aberdeen

September 15.—Gladstone seems uneasy on the Opposition side of the House, even below the gangway. So nice is the equipoise of his balanced opinions that he wishes to be, he says, ‘on the Liberal side of the Conservative party rather than on the Conservative side of the Liberal party.’

From Lord John Russell

September 22.—In the midst of all this I hope you and I shall act together. We have a railway to Windsor which parts into two lines at Barnes and meets again beyond Richmond. So may our two courses in politics be. You have gone by the loop line, and I have gone by the Richmond line ; but we set out together, and may come together to the end of our journey.

To Lord John Russell

September 24.—I observe with pleasure your kind expressions as to the future. We commenced public life together, and I feel that I am drawing to my journey's end.

At this time Lord John Russell considerably raised his reputation as a statesman by an eloquent, judicious, and successful speech in support of what in private he preferred to call Whiggism, but advocated now in public under the more imposing name 'Conservative Progress.' Among the admirers of this manifesto was Graham.

Let me join [he writes] in the general tribute of praise which your speech at Perth has won from all the friends of a Liberal policy. He who says the right thing at the right time and in the right way bends occasions to his will, and this you have succeeded pre-eminently in doing. We shall have a good start at the opening of the session, and an immense advantage is already gained.

On the nature of Sir James Graham's new relations with Lord John Russell some explanations now passed between him and Lord Aberdeen.

HADDO HOUSE, *September 27, 1852.*

I return your correspondence, from which I perceive that your alliance with Lord John, offensive and defensive, is now formally signed and ratified.

I have no objection to this, but I think our respective positions are somewhat modified by it, which it may be as well to explain.

I have great respect for Lord John, and should very much desire to see him at the head of a Government surrounded by a portion of Peel's friends. Both he and they are already informed of this desire on my part. But, if insuperable obstacles arise in the way of its completion, I am not desirous, as an alternative, of seeing him at the head of a Whig-Radical Government. I hope

I am not deficient in liberal views either at home or abroad, but I cannot altogether renounce my Conservative character.

I think you told the electors at Carlisle that you ceased to be a Peelite at Peel's death. Now this event makes no change in me, except indeed that it makes me painfully sensible of the want of his guidance. I am thoroughly convinced of the necessity of a Government of progress, and am prepared to advance more rapidly than probably was ever contemplated by Peel himself. But this progress must be Conservative in principle. You may fall back upon Whiggism, in which you were bred, but I was bred at the feet of Gamaliel, and must always regard Mr. Pitt as the first of statesmen.

To Lord Aberdeen

NETHERBY, *September 29, 1852.*

Since Peel's death I have concealed nothing from you, and you have been privy to every communication that has passed between me and Lord John. I have shown no eager desire to join a Whig Government, and while Lord John was in power I stood aloof from him.

On every ground, personal and political, I am opposed to the Derby-Disraeli Administration; and though I have no particular wish to exalt Lord John, or to replace him at the head of affairs, yet I do not hesitate to prefer him, if this be the alternative, to the Government now in office, and I have declared my readiness to combine with him in fighting the battle of opposition.

I do not think I said at Carlisle 'I ceased to be a Peelite when Peel died.' But what I did say at Carlisle with respect to progressive reform and popular government was at once repudiated by the Peelites, you alone with Cardwell refusing to forego all political connection with me.

I have had to fight for my seat in the House of Commons, and I cannot fail to vindicate my declared opinions. Lord John has naturally made advances to me in proportion to the degree in which these opinions coincided with his own.

To say the truth, I have felt all along, and I think

Lord John has felt, that your tone towards him was more confiding and conciliatory than mine.

I should be sorry indeed if I thought that I were removed by one hair's breadth farther from you. The tie with my other colleagues in Peel's Government was cut by their own act and desire. Indeed, by common consent, after Peel's death, it was admitted and understood between me and them that our position was different, and that eventually our courses might be divergent.

From Lord Aberdeen

October 8, 1852.

Your situation is so different from mine that the allegiance you have sworn may be natural enough. But in me it would be quite unsuitable. I may possibly agree with Lord John hereafter as cordially as yourself, but it must be as a Liberal Conservative, and not as a Whig.

I adverted to this difference of position between us as a matter of fact, but which did not involve the necessity of any difference of opinion or conduct.

I regret, however, that your recent declaration seems to widen the separation between yourself and Peel's friends, which it has always been my hope and desire to close. I did not approve of the whole of your Carlisle speech; but I made full allowance for the situation in which you were placed, and utterly rejected all share in the manner in which it was received by some of our friends. I thought it possible that by maintaining the same friendly relations with all I might be the means of bringing you once more together.

I still go on hoping against hope, and will not resign this prospect, which you well know is not entertained by me to the exclusion of Lord John, but quite the contrary. I consider him to be an essential element in any such union.

To Lord Aberdeen

October 9.—There is no use in weighing with over-nicety the exact measure of our mutual confidence, kindness, and

goodwill. It suffices that they are unbroken and undiminished ; and I rest happy in the persuasion that no event is likely to occur which will disturb the perfect amity now subsisting between us.

I think that you and I shall be spectators of the public game much more than active players, and bystanders may take a deep interest in it, and even differ as to the best mode of playing it, without a quarrel.

We have no rival ambitions, no different objects. Our early training and predilections were not alike, but our present views and opinions are similar, and our past attachment to the common friend whom we have lost was equally ardent and sincere. In the evening of life, when the heat of passions is abated, and when the shadows of recollection are prolonged, such circumstances as these are not wantonly disregarded, and they are pledges that we shall continue friends till the close of the day, which cannot be far distant.

The allegiance to Lord John, which you say I have sworn, is strictly limited to conjoint opposition to the present Government. I have changed no opinion, I have submitted in no degree my future course to his dictation. He believed that I was one of his competitors. I have relieved his anxiety on this head, but I have not promised to be his vassal, and my independence is very dear to me.

From Lord Aberdeen

October 12.—I will not dwell on the subject of your new relations with Lord John. Between us I trust they cannot make the slightest difference ; but between you and Peel's friends, who do not feel towards Lord John as I do, the case is otherwise.

Your separation from them is now complete ; and although I will not abandon the hope of seeing a reunion, the difficulties of any connection beyond that of social intercourse are greatly increased.

At any rate your position is simple and well defined. Mine is somewhat more complicated, because I am not prepared to renounce the confidence of Peel's friends and former colleagues.

Warned by this correspondence of the risk of his attitude being misunderstood, Graham prudently declined to attend a political dinner given by Lord John as a party leader.

To Lord John Russell

November 1.—You press me to come to your dinner. I am most reluctant to decline, but the truth must be told—real friendship cannot exist without it. A dinner given by you on the eve of the Address must be regarded as a move of a political character.

You know my readiness to act cordially with you in opposition to Lord Derby, but I am not prepared to enter into any ulterior arrangements; whereas my presence at your political dinner at this juncture would be misconstrued into a visible sign of some such willingness.

I shall endeavour to prove by my public conduct that my absence is not to be traced to any unfriendly motives. The frankness of this letter is the best proof that my feelings are far different.

From Lord John Russell

November 2, 1852.

These accounts of foreign affairs, and of the state of our navy, are far from pleasant, and I did not include them when I said I was in high spirits at the state of public affairs.

Perhaps half my delight arises from the freedom I feel from that weight which ten months ago pressed upon me, when Tories, Peelites, and Manchester Radicals were all desirous of upsetting the Government, and no one cared to defend it except myself. Derby is now the cock-shy in my place.

But I have more rational grounds.

1. Free Trade, so long contested, and some time in jeopardy, is now safe, suckled by the very wolf which opened its jaws to devour it.

2. Whatever may be the divisions of parties, there is a clear majority of the House of Commons against the

old Tory notions of government, and against the new Radical notions of the Constitution.

How this majority will crystallise, and what Ministry it will support, are problems to be worked out.

You seem to have had for the last three or four years a belief that Hume and his party might be reconciled, and amalgamated with Whigs and Liberal Conservatives. This I never believed. But I believe that neither Hume, Cobden, nor Bright can form or lead a compact party, and that those who agree in many of their opinions will give their practical support to men less extreme and more judicious.

To Mr. Lewis

November 2.—I have stated to Lord John without reserve my reasons for declining to take a part in this political demonstration.

My hostility to Lord Derby's Government admits of no doubt. My willingness to co-operate with Lord John in Opposition is equally manifest. I do not choose to give any pledge, express or implied, as to ulterior intentions or arrangements. I shall reserve to myself the utmost freedom of independent judgment wherewith to deal with future contingencies as they may arise.

I care little for the imputation of false motives. Lust of power and of place has not been my besetting sin, and I shall endeavour so to act as to defy slander.

From Lord John Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, *November 3, 1852.*

I am sorry you don't dine with me on the 10th, as I shall, or may, have much need of your counsel.

Cobden, Gladstone, and I may all take different views of the language which Derby and Disraeli may put into the Queen's Speech. I shall endeavour to agree with Gladstone.

My not giving a dinner would have been equivalent to that degradation which Mr. Crawford proclaimed was to be my fate. But there is no obligation for you to attend the dinner, and I shall nevertheless expect your cordial co-operation.

On this subject Sir James writes to Lady Graham :

GROSVENOR PLACE, *November 12, 1852.*

MY DEAREST FAN,

As I anticipated, my presence last night was quite unnecessary, and the real struggle is postponed by common consent until the week after next.

Although I hate these repeated journeys, I long to return home, for I feel here like an outcast and a stranger in my own house, when separated from you and the children.

Lord John was civil, but somewhat reserved, and my refusal to attend the dinner has rekindled the old sentiments towards me in the bosoms of the Whigs, in which love is not the largest ingredient.

The amendment was now drafted by Graham's pen.

To Lord John Russell

I met at Lord Aberdeen's the Duke of Newcastle, Mr. Sidney Herbert, Mr. Gladstone, and Sir John Young. I stated to them the substance of our conversation on Mr. Villiers' motion. I submitted the words on which you and I had agreed, and we had no difficulty in coming to a satisfactory decision.

They would have wished that the promised measures of the Government might have been brought forward without even the appearance of obstruction; but they admitted all the difficulties of the case, and assented to the determination that the motion shall be made.

We made some verbal alterations. I now send the copy, in my handwriting, to which they have given their assent. They are of opinion that the motion cannot be made in a better or safer form.

Sir John Young believes that it will be carried if the Whigs and Radicals give a cordial support. I hear that the [Irish] Brigade will vote for it.

[Enclosure]

That it is the opinion of this House that the policy of unrestricted competition, firmly maintained and

prudently extended, will best enable the industry of the country to bear its burden, and will thereby most surely promote the welfare and the contentment of the people, and that the House will be ready to take into consideration any measures consistent with these principles, which, in pursuance of Her Majesty's gracious speech and recommendations, may be laid before it.

From Mr. Lewis

November 15, 1852.

I quite concur in your view. The Government brought Charles Villiers' notice upon them by that oracular sentence in the Speech, and by their determination not to admit that they had changed their opinions.

The best thing that can happen would be that the motion be made in moderate terms, that it be supported with able speeches and strong facts, that it be opposed in that querulous, whining, petulant tone which this Government assume on all occasions, that it be carried, and that the Government stay in and open their budget.

When Lord Derby, George Bentinck, and Disraeli were attacking Peel, their public virtue was of the most austere kind—of such a fibre that Cato the Censor would have thought it too rigid. But now, when the smallest portion of their own discipline is applied to them—when a single leaf out of their sermon-book is administered to them—they instantly fall to complaining and snivelling, and say that all opposition is obstructive and unfair.

Contrary to Graham's advice, the resolution by Villiers was so worded as to give the Government some excuse for saying they could not possibly accept it. Mr. Disraeli therefore moved an amendment, on which Graham writes :

To Mr. Gladstone

November 20.—I have attentively considered Disraeli's amendment, and I have made up my mind to support the original motion. I cannot refuse my assent to the unequivocal assertion that the Free Trade policy, especially including the repeal of the Corn Laws, is 'just, wise, and beneficial.'

I am not prepared to limit to 'the working classes' the statement of its good effects. I believe them to have been national. Moreover, I prefer the words of a tried friend to the cause. I regard with jealousy the tardy admissions and measured phrases of a convert. In a word, when Free Trade is at stake, I would rather act with Charles Villiers than with Disraeli.

But later Palmerston also moved the very amendment—put into his hands by Gladstone and Herbert—which Graham had drafted, and thereupon Lord John wrote :

It was very unfair of Palmerston to produce your resolution. But my opinion is, that to set things straight we ought to advise Villiers, in concert with Mr. Gladstone and Sidney Herbert, to offer to withdraw his resolution, provided Disraeli would do the like.

Villiers declining, Graham could not but vote with Palmerston, for his own words against those of Villiers. The vote was awkward, but the result was to secure the assent of the Government to a motion that ascribed the prosperous state of the country to Free Trade. The majority was overwhelming—468 to 63. And so the nation has stood committed, for half a century since, to the enlightened commercial policy of Peel.

After the division Mr. Lewis wrote :

November 28.—The course of the last debates was untoward. If Charles Villiers had adopted your draft, and had stuck to it, everything would have gone right. As it was, the House blundered at last into the right decision.

It would clearly have been a great mistake to turn out the Government by an indirect blow before they are committed to their Budget.

The debate was well sustained by the Opposition. On the ministerial side there was nothing but Disraeli's

wonderful argument to prove that the Protectionists had never been Protectionists.

Next day Mr. Disraeli made a formal proposal to Lord Palmerston to join Lord Derby's Government. He declined, saying 'that he could not do so singly, and that the Peelites with whom he was acting showed no disposition to do so.'¹ Without fresh aid, therefore, Disraeli produced his long-expected Budget. His speech was brilliant, but his financial proposals, as Graham had predicted, did not bear debate. The compensation offered to the agricultural interest proved illusory and impracticable. On the first division the Government sustained defeat, and instantly resigned.

¹ Ashley's *Palmerston*, ii. 256.

CHAPTER IX

1852-53

Lord Aberdeen summoned to form a Coalition Government—By Graham's Advice declines a Joint Commission—Lord John Russell's Doubts—His Proposal to lead the House of Commons without Office—Graham objects—Palmerston declines Office—Afterwards accepts—Scramble for Cabinet Rank—And for Minor Appointments—The Cake too Small—Graham's Ultimatum—Re-election for Carlisle—Gladstone's Budget—New Reform Bill.

A GAIN the attempt was to be made to form a joint Government of Whigs and Peelites. In 1851 it had failed for the reason reported curtly by Lord John Russell to his colleagues :

Lord Aberdeen and Sir James Graham object decidedly to any legislative measure on the subject of the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill. This puts an end to the negotiation.¹

The statesmen then commanded by the Queen to find out what was possible were, on behalf of the Whigs, Lord John Russell, on behalf of the Peelites Aberdeen and Graham. Afterwards Whig overtures had been made separately to Graham, but declined. Now, on Lord John's own suggestion through his brother,² the Queen sent for two peers—Lansdowne and Aberdeen.

But, as Coalition Governments are rare, the whole story of the formation of this one may well be given from a journal kept at the time by Sir James Graham.

¹ Walpole's *Life of Lord John Russell*, ii. 127.

² *Ibid.*, p. 161.

December 17, 1852.—In consequence of a defeat on the Budget Lord Derby's Government determined to resign, and Lord Derby went to Osborne to notify this determination.

December 18.—A messenger arrived with letters both to Lord Lansdowne and to Lord Aberdeen, directing them to wait on Her Majesty together without delay. Lord Lansdowne is suffering from gout, and could not leave London. Lord Aberdeen, unwilling to take the advantage of going alone, notified to Her Majesty that he awaited further orders.

Lord Aberdeen had called at Lansdowne House, and came to me immediately afterwards. Lord Lansdowne was gratified by the considerate delicacy which restrained Lord Aberdeen from hastening to Osborne without him, and opened pretty freely on the state of affairs.

He intimated that he was not desirous to undertake the duties of Prime Minister. He admitted that he had been much pressed to do so by Palmerston and others ; that he was opposed to further measures of Parliamentary Reform ; that he was aware of the probable unwillingness of some of Peel's friends to serve under him ; and that on the whole he considered Lord Aberdeen best fitted for the task at this juncture. He requested Lord Aberdeen to go to Osborne without him, if H.M. again required his attendance, and he promised in general terms his co-operation and assistance, in arriving at a settlement with the Whigs.

An intimation dropped from him that he anticipated a joint commission to Lord Aberdeen and Lord John Russell for the formation of a combined Administration.

I strongly urged on Lord Aberdeen the impolicy of accepting any such joint commission. His relative position with Lord John required the undivided confidence and full authority of the Crown. Any offer made by him to Lord John, if spontaneous, would be a pledge both of his personal regard and of his liberal policy. Mere submission to the will of the Queen on his part would be regarded by Lord John as a proof of Royal favour rather than of his personal regard, and they would start as co-equals if not as rivals, the seed

of early differences thus being sown at the commencement.

Lord Aberdeen assented to my reasoning, and assured me that he would only accept undivided authority.

Dined with Sidney Herbert. Met Duke of Newcastle, Gladstone, Goulburn, and Cardwell. I expressed a strong opinion that no Government could be safely formed without a previous agreement among the members of the Cabinet on the subjects of renewal of the Income-tax, and of Parliamentary Reform ; it was not necessary to fix details, but the principles, of no discriminating duty in the one case, and of disfranchisement to a limited extent in the other, appeared to me indispensable preliminaries. Not much difference of opinion among us on these points.

December 19.—Lord John Russell called on me after Church. He told me that Lord Aberdeen had gone to Osborne this morning in obedience to the Queen's commands. Lord John was about to open to me his views with respect to the relative positions of himself and of Lord Aberdeen. I stopped him at once, and said that, without unkindness or undue reserve, it was premature for him and me to discuss this particular point. The Queen's intentions were yet unknown. I was certain that Lord Aberdeen would see no person on his return until he had communicated with Lord John ; and that after that interview, when the Queen's pleasure was known, and when Lord Aberdeen had stated his feelings and wishes, if Lord John wished it, I would communicate with him most unreservedly.

We then discussed measures, and I found no difference in the conclusions at which we had separately arrived. He agreed with me in thinking that an offer should be made to Palmerston, if the ministerial arrangements proceeded.

He complained somewhat of Gladstone's appeal to the 'Conservative' country gentlemen in a strain which sought reconciliation. He said that these men were his bitter opponents, and he knew not how this double union was to be effected.

I answered that the severance of the more liberal portion of the Conservative county members from

Lord Derby and Disraeli was of vital importance ; and that this was the time, and Gladstone the person, for effecting so great a good. At parting he said, ' I shall be anxious to hear what are the Queen's commands.'

I called on the Duke of Newcastle, and talked with him fully and freely on all the leading topics of my conversation with Lord John. It is clear that the Peelites under Lord Aberdeen are ready to go as far in the Liberal sense as Lord John desires ; but under Lord John they will not act, though they are willing to act with him. The question now is, Will Lord John act under and with Lord Aberdeen ?

December 20.—Saw Herbert early. He had received certain information that Palmerston, if not included in the pending arrangement, would place himself at the head of the Opposition in the Commons. He thus shows us the point of his sword, and hopes by threats to prevail.

Met Bright in the street on Saturday. He told me that if the new Government would pledge itself to progressive reform—'moderate as you please, but progressive'—he and Cobden would support it.

I observed that we had abated a nuisance, and that we must not allow it to be reconstructed. Bright fully assented. He said that he and his friends were no candidates for office.

I remarked that great political power permanently excluded from office was neither natural nor safe. He did not deny this proposition, but intimated that the time had not yet come.

Went to the House of Commons. Resignation of Ministers announced by Mr. Disraeli, who made something like an apology for certain uncivil expressions used by him towards me in a late debate. I accepted it at once, declaring the offence to have been unprovoked, and therefore, I presumed, unintentional, and I readily forgave it.

In the House of Lords Lord Derby made a most unusual attack on Lord Aberdeen in his absence. He sang the praises of Lord Malmesbury, and declared himself the victim of a factious combination.

Walked from the House with Herbert. From him I learnt that Lord John Russell, having met Lord

Aberdeen in the Park, volunteered the declaration that he was willing to lead the Commons and accept the seals of the Foreign Office under Lord Aberdeen. Lord Aberdeen jumped at the offer, commended its generosity, and closed with it on the spot. He went to Osborne, announced Lord John's generous offer, and relying on it accepted the Queen's commission to form a Government. He returned last night from Osborne, and saw Lord John, who did not retract his offer.

Here it is only fair to note that Graham's record differs somewhat from the story as told in the *Life of Lord John Russell*.

On the authority of a diary of Lady John Russell, Sir Spencer Walpole reports Lord John as having said to Lord Aberdeen only that ' *he thought* he should accept office under him.'

But Lord Aberdeen wrote to Lord John :

When you voluntarily expressed such an intention the day before I went to Osborne, you relieved me from all doubt. When I returned from Osborne on Sunday night, I found you precisely in the same frame of mind.¹

And this Lord John apparently did not deny. It may be observed also that, according to his biographer, the retraction was chiefly on account of health. Lady John wrote to a sister that the Foreign Office would kill her husband in six months. According to Sir James Graham it was put more upon another ground.

December 20 [Monday].—This morning early Lord John went to Argyll House and declared to Lord Aberdeen that reflection and consultation with some of his friends had convinced him that the act of submission on his part was not consistent with his honour, and that, though he would support Lord Aberdeen's Government,

¹ Walpole, *Life of Lord John Russell*, ii. 169.

and advise his friends to join it, he could not be a member of it.

Lord Aberdeen remonstrated, and told him that if he had known this on Saturday, before he saw the Queen, he should have acted differently.

Lord John finally took time till to-morrow to make up his mind.

Ten p.m.—Lord Aberdeen confirms in every particular the account given to me of Lord John's promise on Saturday and of his retractation this morning. Lord Aberdeen informed the Queen this evening of this sudden change of purpose on Lord John's part, which may render the success of Lord Aberdeen precarious. Lord John is to give his final answer to-morrow.

He proposed this afternoon to sit in the Cabinet and to lead the Commons, but not to hold any office. There is no precedent for this course. It avoids vacating the seat, and it destroys the equal terms and the common interest which ought to unite colleagues. This proposal is inadmissible, but it is an approximation to the first intention, which was generous and correct.

December 21.—Heard from Ellice. Lord John's decision still doubtful. 'Home influences' are said to be strong, and the pride of the Whig party revolts at an act of submission to 'an old Tory.'

Lord Aberdeen told the Queen that Lord Lansdowne would have advised her to associate Lord John with Lord Aberdeen in the commission to form a Government; but he added that he must also inform Her Majesty that he must have declined any such divided authority, for the emergency required her concentrated confidence and entire sanction.

The Queen and Prince at once adopted the view taken by Lord Aberdeen, and before he left the Closet he kissed the Queen's hand as her First Minister.

The Queen wrote a letter in flattering terms to Lord John, making a strong appeal to his patriotism and self-denial in present circumstances. But the power exclusively confided to Lord Aberdeen has fluttered the dove-cote.

Lewis called. He tells me that Lord John is disposed to revert to his original decision, and to serve under

Lord Aberdeen. The Reform Club has got an inkling of his vacillation. Their indignation is unmeasured and loudly expressed.

Lord Aberdeen called on me. He stated that Lord John had positively refused to accept the seals of the Foreign Office, alleging his inability to bear the fatigue. He then proposed to lead the Commons without any office, but with a place in the Cabinet. Lord Aberdeen objected to so great an innovation, but Lord John pleaded the example of the Duke of Wellington under Sir Robert Peel, while Lord Hill was Commander of the Forces, and the Duke leader of the House of Lords.

The Duke was himself an exception to all rule; moreover, the Lords are not the Commons, and the principle of popular election being necessary in confirmation of the choice of the Crown where ministers in the House of Commons are concerned does not apply.

Lord Aberdeen by my advice will make the acceptance of some office by Lord John and the vacating of his seat a *sine quâ non*.

The seals of the Foreign Office have been offered to Lord Clarendon. Lord Aberdeen called on Palmerston, and proposed to include him in the arrangement.

Palmerston was gratified by the offer, but declined it. He said that he and Lord Aberdeen had stood so long in hostile array one against the other that it was too late now to join, and the combination in his opinion would not be creditable or beneficial to either party. He added that, if there were no other objection, his reluctance to agree to any further Reform of Parliament would be an insuperable one.

Lord Aberdeen opened to me the choice of the Home Office or the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. I gave my consent to neither the one nor the other.

I promised to call on him to-morrow, when Lord John's ultimatum will be known. I do not like the look of this drama. The infusion of aristocracy and of old Toryism will be too strong.

There was a question of inviting Sugden to retain the Great Seal. Lord John protested, and Lord Aberdeen gave way. Cranworth is to be moved into 'the marble chair,' if the formation be not cut short.

December 22.—Met Lord John Russell at Lord Aberdeen's this morning. He announced his ultimatum in a written form, that he would lead the House of Commons and sit in the Cabinet, but hold no office; vacating, however, his seat by immediate acceptance of the Chiltern Hundreds.

Lord John's proposal would seem to be obnoxious to many decisive objections. He creates a new office,—the leadership of the House of Commons with a seat in the Cabinet, not held at the pleasure of the Crown, and exonerated from the necessity of vacating the seat in the House of Commons, whereby popular control may be eluded.

It is true that Lord John in the present instance proposes to accept the Chiltern Hundreds. But it is a voluntary homage paid by him to a great constitutional principle, which others in the same position may hereafter set at nought. The commanding position of Leader of the Commons without the toils of office will soon be eagerly sought; no necessity for accepting the Chiltern Hundreds will exist; and henceforth the new leader, under similar circumstances, will not be very willing to vacate his seat.

But what will be his relations to the Crown, to the First Minister, and to the country?

He will owe nothing to the favour of his Sovereign, while he wields the whole power of the democratic body. He will not be on equal terms with his colleagues. His relations to the country will not be less anomalous. His power will be great, his immediate responsibilities small. He holds no office, and presents no assailable front; yet he may sway the counsels of the State in the most fatal direction.

In the person of Lord John Russell these evils are not to be anticipated, but when I look at the precedent to be established I recoil from it with apprehension.

If failing health disqualify Lord John from discharging the duties of a single office, is he prepared to admit that he never again can be Prime Minister sitting in the House of Commons? The supreme control over every department, and the weight of care and anxiety which are the lot of the First Minister of the Crown, are not to

be compared with the duties of the Foreign Office ; and he who shrinks from the lighter burden must be prepared to renounce all desire of the greater charge.

December 23.—Lord John has yielded, and is now willing to take the seals of the Foreign Office. Palmerston also has reconsidered his refusal, and will now most probably accept the Home Department. There is no room for Disraeli and Lord Derby. Otherwise we had better all kiss and be friends.

I have great faith in the strong cohesion of office ; otherwise it might be difficult to bind together the materials of which the Cabinet will be composed.

It will embrace, however, great administrative talent and debating power, and will present a more formidable front to the Protectionists than they had believed possible. The difficulties of agreement as to Parliamentary Reform are the seeds of future dissension.

The Government may be considered as formed. Seven Peelites, five Whigs, one Radical, compose the Cabinet, John Russell and Palmerston will balance each other, and it may be possible with skill to rule between them. It is a powerful team, but it will require good driving. There are some odd tempers and queer ways among them, but on the whole they are gentlemen, and they have a perfect gentleman at their head, who is honest and direct, and who will not brook insincerity in others.

I called on Palmerston to offer my congratulations on our reunion, and to express my cordial desire that we might co-operate as well as we had done in the Cabinet of Lord Grey. He was courteous, but rather embarrassed. He appeared to think the opposition which awaited us formidable. What would it have been if he had led it, in concert with Disraeli ?

We shall all look somewhat strangely at each other when we first meet in Cabinet.

So far the negotiation between principals from opposite camps had gone as smoothly as could well be expected. But when it came to distribution of offices and of Cabinet rank, unfortunately it was otherwise. Painful altercations

as to rival claims came near to breaking off the intended union. The journal proceeds :

December 24.—Lord John Russell most unexpectedly raised fresh difficulties this morning on the ground that the Whigs were not represented in the new Cabinet sufficiently. He proposed at one coup an infusion of three additional Whigs, and talked of Lord Carlisle as the fittest person for the Lieutenancy of Ireland. It became necessary to make a stand, and to bring the Whigs to their ultimatum.

Lord Aberdeen consented to Lord Granville as President of the Council, and proposed that Lord Lansdowne should sit in the Cabinet without an office. This proposal, which reduced the Whig addition from three to two, saved the Board of Trade for Cardwell, but excluded both him and Canning from the Cabinet. Lord John did not regard it as satisfactory, and fought the point so long and so pertinaciously that the new writs could not be moved to-day, and the House was adjourned till Monday. Towards evening, at the instance of Lord Lansdowne, Lord John Russell yielded an unwilling assent to Lord Aberdeen's last proposal : and the Cabinet is now definitely constituted. How it will work Heaven knows, but the experiment will now be tried.

Molesworth enters the Cabinet with the Queen's full assent. He stipulated for the right to support Ballot, as heretofore, to which Lord Aberdeen gave his assent.

The Radicals cannot say that they have been overlooked in the comprehensive arrangements. It is indeed a tessellated pavement.

December 25.—Lord John Russell is very much annoyed by the disparaging tone of the articles in *The Times*, which, while it supports Lord Aberdeen, attacks him and the Whigs. He is still also dissatisfied with the exclusion of Lord Clarendon and of Sir George Grey from the Cabinet, and thinks that the Whig share of the spoil is insufficient.

It is melancholy to see how little fitness for office is regarded on all sides, and how much the public employments are treated as booty to be divided among

the successful combatants. The Irish Government also is still a matter of contest.

I discussed these matters with Lord Aberdeen and Lord John at Argyll House ; if we three were left alone, we could easily adjust every difficulty ; it is the intervention of interested parties on opposite sides which mars every settlement. I asked Lord John ‘whether we should get the concern on its legs, and whether it would run.’ He answered doubtfully, and led me to think that he did not expect it would be of long duration.

We spoke of Reform, and of the known objections to any decisive measure entertained both by Lord Lansdowne and by Lord Palmerston. Lord John said he relied on my support, and thought that Lansdowne would retire from the Cabinet, if it adopted a new Reform Bill.

December 26.—We had a meeting at Argyll House this evening with Lord John Russell and Mr. Hayter, and the Duke of Newcastle and Mr. Herbert. We finally settled the list of subordinate members of the Government and of the Household.

The same wrangle continues for places, and the same unabated jealousy of Whigs against Peelites. The list, however, is almost finally settled, and for good or for evil the Government is formed.

December 27.—The Whigs returned to the charge, and claimed in a most menacing manner a larger share of the minor offices.

Sir Charles Wood and Mr. Hayter came to me in the first instance, and tried to shake me individually in my opinion. I was stout, and combated all their arguments, which assumed an angry tone. We came to no satisfactory conclusion in my house, and the discussion was adjourned to Lord John’s.

I found Lord John more amenable to reason, but the whole arrangement was on the point of being broken off.

It was one o’clock, the House of Commons was to meet at two by special adjournment, and the writs were to be moved punctually at that hour. Sir Charles Wood intimated that unless some further concession were made the arrangement was at an end, and that the moving of the writs must be postponed.

Then came Graham's ultimatum.

I said that I should go down to the House, and make then and there a full statement of the case, and recall by telegraph my address to the electors of Carlisle, which declared my acceptance of office. This firmness, coupled with my rising to leave the room, brought the gentlemen to reason. Hayter was sent to the House of Commons, and moved the writs.

December 28.—The contest as to minor offices was renewed, with equal pertinacity, but with less effect after the moving of the principal writs.

A battle was fought for the Great Seal of Ireland, which was ultimately yielded to Brady, the ex-Whig Chancellor. This concession was no sooner made than an attempt to force Redington as the Under Secretary for Ireland was commenced. He, being a Catholic, had consented to the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, against his private judgment, and in defiance of his co-religionists. This appointment would have been war with the Brigade, and it was necessary to refuse it peremptorily.

The dissatisfaction of Lord Clarendon and Lord John was keenly expressed, but was ultimately mitigated by the offer to Redington of the Secretaryship to the Board of Control.

I have never passed a week so unpleasantly. It was a battle for places from hostile camps, and the Whigs disregarded fitness for the public service altogether. They fought for their men as partisans, and all other considerations, as well as consequences, were disregarded.

Lord Aberdeen's patience and justice are exemplary. He is firm and yet conciliatory, and has ended by making an arrangement which is on the whole impartial, and quite as satisfactory as circumstances would admit. Disraeli's observation is true that 'the cake is too small for us.'

This unpleasing scramble, which gave too much reason for Disraeli's gibe, is described by Sir James Graham from the Peelite point of view. Sir Spencer Walpole states fairly the grounds on which the two parties rested their conflicting claims :

The Whigs not unnaturally supposed that, as they contributed the bulk of the support on which the new Ministry relied, they should be adequately represented in the Cabinet. The Peelites, brushing away mere numerical considerations, pointed to the ability of their own leaders.¹

Those who wish to judge whether the distribution was fair will be guided probably by their own opinions as to which is the more important ground for assigning office—the amount of support that candidates may bring, or their personal fitness for the duties.

Both points usually come into consideration. When, for example, Sir Robert Peel formed his great Government, he included several old Tories, not as equal in capacity to men whom he left out, such as Herries and Disraeli, but as commanding more support. On the present occasion both parties chiefly concerned were to be represented. But looking to the vast interests at stake upon the capacity of Parliamentary chiefs—especially chiefs of the two great spending Departments, Army and Navy, and of the Exchequer—most modern thinkers will hold that it was right to select them for personal fitness rather than in proportion to the voting power of their supporters. No leading Minister, perhaps, brought with him fewer adherents than Mr. Gladstone; but was that a reason why, after his conspicuous triumph over Mr. Disraeli's budget, the country should have been deprived of his own great budget of 1853?

Lord Clarendon and Sir George Grey (who had lost his seat) were left out of the Cabinet for a time, but so were Lord Canning and Mr. Cardwell.

For administrative capacity, no member of the new

¹ *Life of Lord John Russell*, ii. 165.

Cabinet had a better record than Sir James Graham. In his journal he modestly omits to say what office he took, and why. The Home Secretaryship, he says, was offered to him, and the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. The latter was not only offered, but pressed. 'We are trying,' writes Mr. Gladstone, 'to press Graham into that service'; and again, 'notwithstanding the Royal wish [in favour of Mr. Gladstone] we pressed it on Graham; but he refused point blank.' 'His constitutional dislike of high responsibility,' writes Mr. Morley, 'perhaps intervened.' Sir James Graham's papers do not show what guided his choice. But with his mind much occupied, as it was at this time, by the question of National Defence, and being well aware of the shortcomings of the Navy, especially as regarded a supply of seamen, he may have felt that at the Admiralty he could render best service to the State.

As regards Lord John's offer to lead the Commons without office, 'most of Lord Aberdeen's friends, and many of Lord John's,' says Sir Spencer Walpole, 'held that the arrangement was both new and unconstitutional, and they deprecated it on this ground.' Graham's argument to that effect had impressed Lord Aberdeen, but later he wrote to Lord John :

My great desire to agree to whatever may be most agreeable to yourself, and my belief that you must be a better judge in this matter than myself, would induce me, if possible, to get over these scruples. I know, however, that some of our colleagues entertain a very strong opinion on the subject, and I have reason to believe that the Queen would regard any such arrangement with feelings of great repugnance.¹

¹ Walpole, *Life of Lord John Russell*, ii. 168.

Lord John replied, not over civilly, 'I have weighed all such objections, and find them frivolous and superficial.' Upon this Lord Aberdeen allowed him, after resigning the Foreign Office, to lead the House without office, until he got Lord Granville to vacate for him the Presidency of the Council.

Graham's journal ends with the closing year :

December 29.—The Cabinet dined with Lord Aberdeen. The dinner passed off pleasantly enough ; the conversation general, and with no relation to business. At the close of the evening Gladstone raised some discussion as to the Income Tax, and a Committee of Cabinet was appointed to inquire and to prepare the draft of the measure. The Committee consists of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Lansdowne, Duke of Argyll, Sir Charles Wood, and myself. This will be a pleasant little addition to the labours of the Admiralty.

December 30.—Left London for Netherby. The nomination [for re-election] at Carlisle will take place on the 1st of January. May it be a happy New Year !

1853

The new year began cheerily enough for Graham. At his re-election he gave full swing to the Liberal tendencies which had alarmed and for a while alienated Gladstone.

To Lord Dunfermline

NETHERBY, *January 2, 1853.*

I was yesterday re-elected without opposition, and encouraged by the hearty goodwill and enthusiasm of an immense popular assembly.

I encountered a Chartist, whom Lord Lonsdale had sent from London in the hope of dividing the Liberal party. The Radicals stood true to a man, and refused every temptation. The Tory candidate was thus baffled, and never ventured to appear. On the hustings I had only to contend with the Chartist,

I acted on your principle, and reasoned frankly and confidently with the multitude on the several points of the Charter, as if we had been in council, and they gave a most patient and indulgent hearing. When I stated the arguments which weigh with me against Ballot, they were evidently pleased with the open avowal of my opinions, and were delighted when I told them that my colleague, Sir William Molesworth, differed from me, and had reserved to himself the right, as a Cabinet Minister, of supporting Ballot, with Lord Aberdeen's free consent.

Confidence never fails to be reciprocal. My 'Radical constituency' has freely trusted me; I am bound to say that they are exalted in my estimation. A more elevated tone is quite perceptible among them since the passing of the Reform Act; their improved physical condition is now operating on their moral character; they are more trustworthy, less discontented, better fitted for the exercise of political privileges.

I am quite satisfied that an extension of the Suffrage may be granted with safety, and cannot much longer be withheld without danger, after the promises which have been made. Once made, they must be redeemed, and the measure must be substantial, not illusory.

I hope we may be able to agree with respect to it. The difficulty will not arise with Lord Aberdeen or the Peelites. If there be resistance, it will come from the Aristocratic Whigs, and perhaps from Palmerston.

But I have great hopes in the general concord and efficiency of the Government. Though the materials are not homogeneous, yet the cohesion of office, and antipathy to a common enemy, are a cement of the most powerful kind.

If we rule well, and fulfil our promises, the country is quite willing to be governed by us; if we falter, and cannot, from any cause, give effect to our engagements, the sooner we are extinguished the better. At all events I shall not be disposed to remain responsible for a policy which I do not fully approve.

According to my view the session of 1854 should open with a Reform Bill. But we live in the age of surprises, and we know not what a day may bring forth. The calamity of war would derange all previous calculations.

Sir James at this time stood well not only with his constituents, but, which of late was more rare for him, in public opinion.

From Mr. G. C. Lewis

January 4, 1853.—I don't know what you have done to *The Times*. It is long since they have given you a civil word, but this morning they actually went the length of bestowing on you some praise without a single sneer—an amount of forbearance which must have cost them a severe effort.

I am afraid that some passages in your speech will distress Gladstone. By-the-by, I have been told, in strict confidence, that when the Budget arrived Gladstone's patience was so far exhausted that he was overheard to say, in an audible voice, that Disraeli was a d——d rascal. This on no account to be mentioned until after to-morrow, as it is thought it might lose him his election.

Graham replies :

NETHERBY, *January 5, 1853.*

I have now known this constituency for thirty years, and I see in the new generation the most marked improvement. They are far more intelligent, sober, and dispassionate. They are the most patient audience I ever addressed, and reason is not thrown away on them. They have a claim both on my respect and on my gratitude, and they have confirmed my belief that there is a class between the £10 householders and the old scum of freemen which may be safely trusted with the franchise.

I shall be sorry if by any speech I have endangered Gladstone, but he cannot long remain in his present company, the representative of Oxford dons. Peel would never have risen to the fame he enjoyed had not his connection with the University been severed. I hope Gladstone will succeed on this occasion, but he ought to be on the outlook for a new constituency.

I am very thankful to *The Times* for its praise, which to me is precious on account of its rarity.

January 9.—I suppose that Gladstone is now safe at Oxford. I hope for his own sake that he may never be returned again for that learned body. With a little Cabinet training he would be moulded into a good Liberal, if it were not for that Oxford alloy.

January 20.—If the Protectionists drive him from that seat, in their blindness they will do him a real favour.

Those who venture on assailing Gladstone in the House of Commons will get a broken head for their pains.

For a year the Government enjoyed great prosperity. On the budget Lord Clarendon wrote :

April 19.—Gladstone's was indeed a wonderful effort, and he deserves to succeed if ever man did. Bunsen tells me he was among Tory peers last night in the gallery, all hostile at first to Gladstone, but ending by agreeing with him. Lord John has been here prodigiously pleased.

Later on Mr. Lewis gives his opinion.

August 23.—You have wound up the session triumphantly. Disraeli's absence and silence for the last few weeks will, after his former pugnacious and censorious habit, be taken by the public as indicating a consciousness of defeat.

In the recess the Cabinet were found fairly unanimous on a Reform Bill framed by Russell and Graham.

From Lord John Russell

November 24.—You heard the views of the Cabinet yesterday. I think we have every reason to be satisfied with the general result. On one point I am somewhat embarrassed. It is as to £10 voters in counties. You heard the discussion. Palmerston and I were almost alone [in opposing it]. I am ready to yield to the opinion of the Cabinet, though I think the change a more radical one than any we have adopted. I should like to have your opinion.

It is remarkable that on this point both Russell and Graham hung back with Palmerston.

To Lord John Russell

November 25.—The reception of your measure by the Cabinet was most encouraging, and if happily we continue united, we shall not fail.

You know that my first view and inclination were decidedly in favour of giving the £10 franchise to counties, but I yielded to your objections.

Much is to be said in favour of this, especially where a considerable disfranchisement of suburban voters is about to take place. The first effect would be even salutary and quite safe. But the ultimate effect is by no means so certain, and I cannot divest myself of some of the apprehensions which you entertain. After a time, when counties are closely contested, the £10 occupation franchise will afford immense facilities and irresistible temptation for the manufacture of faggot votes. Every farmer who occupies to the extent of £40 or £50 a year will have a son or two joined with him in the occupation, and his vote, to be exercised at the will of his landlord, will thus obtain augmented but most undue force. The danger is that we shall introduce into England the evils which rendered the 40s. freehold in Ireland the intolerable bane of that country; for, though miscalled a freehold, it was really a low occupation right of voting.

The opinion of the Cabinet is strongly in favour of the change, and there would be great present facility and no immediate danger in its adoption. But reflection tells me that your forethought in this matter is clear, and that the remote probable consequences of this low occupation franchise will be injurious to the county representation.

It is therefore a balance between certain present advantages and remote contingent evils.

I should like to discuss and to consider this matter further with you. It is a most important step, and it must not be taken lightly and in haste. Your caution arrested me, when I was ready somewhat precipitately to make the change. I would now advise you to

pause, before you recede from the ground on which you stand.

Some consideration is due to Palmerston on this head. It is the point to which he attached most importance, next to infliction of a schedule B. If he waive all his other objections, and give a reluctant but firm assent to all our other proposals, he might have just cause to complain if we withdrew a concession made in deference to his wishes and judgment, especially when in the main your opinion agrees with his.

If Palmerston concede to us the addition of the municipal franchise in cities and towns, we may well hesitate before we press him against his will to adopt a £10 occupation franchise in counties.

ADMIRALTY, [*Friday evening*] *November 25, 1853.*

I expected to meet you at Windsor. The Queen sent for me, and in your absence asked me, in presence of the Prince, several questions respecting the Reform Bill.

I stated accurately and fully the present position of the case. I explained to Her Majesty the questions pending and awaiting decision before they were finally submitted to her; and when asked respecting the £10 county franchise I explained at length your objections to a descent to so low a scale, which I admitted had shaken my own preconceived opinion.

I think that I left a favourable impression with regard to the temper and prudence with which you are conducting this great operation. I only wish that you had been at Windsor to give the account yourself. You were expected, and I said that I knew you had intended to come, and that some unforeseen engagement had prevented you. I think that a few words addressed to Her Majesty to explain your absence would be useful.

ADMIRALTY, *Sunday night* [*November 27*].—We cannot flinch from Schedule B., and we have diminished Schedule A. to the greatest extent which is safe. The county franchise also must be reduced lower than £25. We shall be ruined out of doors if we dilute our measure to gratify squeamish tastes within the Cabinet.

Reform Bill notwithstanding, in the new Government

political relations between Graham and Gladstone were confidential.

In December, 1853, Mr. Gladstone applied for information and advice on the question which then engaged his mind of regulating superannuations for the Civil Service. After answering, so far as his memory served him, on details of the arrangements for which he had been himself responsible, and laying down some broad principles by which he had been guided, Graham concludes :

But I have written more than enough to open to you my present impressions. I have the greatest confidence in your discernment of what is right, and in your firmness to accomplish it. Whatever after careful and full deliberation you shall determine to be a just settlement of the matter will be supported by me with unhesitating confidence and a clear conscience.

Of the reforms made by Lord Aberdeen's Government in their brief tenure of power the most far-reaching was their reconstruction of the Civil Service.

For India this was set on foot chiefly by the zeal of Mr. Lowe (afterwards Lord Sherbrooke), at the Board of Control. In the India Bill of 1853 he inserted and carried a clause opening all the higher appointments to competitive examination.

For a like reform in the Home Civil Service the foundation was laid by Mr. Gladstone, in a Report obtained from Sir Stafford Northcote and Sir Charles Trevelyan ; and the first colleague to whom he wrote on its behalf was Graham.

DOWNING STREET, *January 3, 1854.*

Let me without preface commend this paper to your particular consideration.

In the case of Haileybury we have struck an undisguised and deadly blow at patronage ; in the case of Oxford we are likely to propose measures which I think are strong, but which I hope will be salutary for the purpose of setting up competition as against restriction or private favour ; I am convinced that we have it in our power to render an immense service to the country by a circumspect but energetic endeavour to apply a like principle to the Civil Service and the great administrative departments.

I do not want any pledge as to details ; what I seek is your countenance and favour in an endeavour to introduce to the Cabinet a proposal that we should give our sanction to the principle that, in every case where a satisfactory test of a defined and palpable nature can be furnished, the public service shall be laid open to personal merit in lieu of the present system of appointments more or less controlled by favour.

I am very deeply in earnest about this matter, but not, I hope, beyond the reach of sage advice.

For the present I do not intend to mention it in the Cabinet. I have spoken to Lord Aberdeen, and I purpose to speak to Newcastle, and perhaps Molesworth, before taking any other step.

This is *my* contribution to the picnic of Parliamentary Reform.

With his habitual promptitude, zeal, and candour, by return of post Sir James made answer :

ADMIRALTY, *January 4, 1854.*

I have read with the greatest interest and attention the very able paper on the reconstruction of the Civil Service. The great extent of the proposed change, and its probable consequences, both official and political, demand the most careful deliberation. I am unwilling to pledge myself to an irrevocable opinion, but you are entitled to expect from me the frank statement of my first impressions, and I shall communicate them to you without reserve.

I readily admit the truth of the preliminary observa-

tions which trace the defects of the present mode of appointment to the Civil Service ; and I subscribe to the doctrine that it is better to train men young than take them from other professions ; that they should be made constantly to feel that their promotion and future prospects depend entirely on the industry and ability with which they discharge their duties ; and that the establishment of a proper scheme of examinations before appointment, and of probation after it, would be the best system for obtaining a constant succession of young men of high attainments, competitors for admission into the lower ranks of the public service.

The difficulty ever present to my mind has been the necessity of devising a scheme of examination which under central control would pervade every department, and which at the same time should be adapted to the particular wants and character of each.

I have never yet been able to satisfy myself that these conflicting difficulties can be reconciled and overcome ; and though in the plan proposed of a Central Board of Examiners I see imperfections ; though the power transferred to them will be almost inordinate ; though their responsibility may be incomplete : yet on the whole I consider this plan the best which I have contemplated or seen, and I believe that it may be brought into a working shape. If competition be introduced—and it is the life and soul of the plan—it should not be for specific appointments, but general and periodical, for reasons stated in the paper with irresistible truth and force.

The distribution of the successful candidates among the different departments will require more consideration than has yet been bestowed on it. But I agree in the opinion that if the difficulty of the general examination be overcome, all other difficulties are secondary, and by no means insurmountable.

I see the advantages of throwing the examinations entirely open, for thereby the largest number of the best candidates will be attracted. But moral worth and personal merits apart from intellectual attainments are essential elements of fitness.

This consideration brings me to the second part of the

paper, which treats of probation, and of the best mode of maintaining the efficiency of an office.

I give an unhesitating assent to all the reasoning and recommendations set forth under this head. With respect to moral conduct and personal character, the head of the department, when he ceases to have any interest whatever in the patronage of his office, will be firm, impartial, and fearless in administering justice to those who are placed under him. He will have an honest pride in rewarding merit, he will have no scruples in punishing delinquency, and in the plan some salutary safeguards are suggested against caprice and error of judgment.

Promotion also and increase of salary should be made dependent on reports and certificates from superior officers, in the manner proposed. The stimulus to merit will then be effective, the check on misconduct will be really operative, and I am convinced that this portion of the measure cannot fail to be productive of the most salutary effects.

But when I have said this I have made an admission which is a most powerful argument in favour of open competition, and of a general examination; for no such power over promotion and the progressive increase of salary could be safely entrusted to heads of Departments under the present system of patronage. Honest and scrupulous men would mistrust themselves, and would not choose to exercise it, and in their hands the power would be in abeyance; reckless and unscrupulous men would flagrantly abuse it, and the power itself from open scandal would soon fall into disuse. . . .

I have said enough on the official part of this great question, but I cannot altogether overlook the political considerations connected with it. It is clear that if this measure be adopted the reign of Patronage is at an end.

Before the Revolution, the Crown struggled to maintain supreme power by prerogative; since the Revolution, it has succeeded in upholding supremacy by influence. This influence is mainly dependent on patronage, and is brought to bear on the Parliamentary system of government by its double action, both on the constituent and on the representative body; and the House of Lords itself

is not elevated above the sphere of this great attraction. The plan proposed at one stroke abolishes the civil patronage, and leaves only the naval and military at the free disposal of the Crown as a matter of grace and favour.

I am not certain that Parliamentary Government can be conducted on such principles of purity. Notwithstanding all our reforms, the experiment is to be tried *non in republica Platonis, sed in faece Romuli*.

I admit that a sounder public opinion is gaining strength from day to day ; that the extent of corrupting influence is obvious, and is likely to bring both the system and those who administer it into dangerous disrepute.

Still it must not be dissembled that this is an immense stride towards self-government in the democratic sense ; that it is pregnant with indirect consequences which cannot be exactly estimated or foreseen ; for it leaves the House of Commons—that mighty engine—without its accustomed regulator, at the very moment when you are about to increase its power.

The Reform Bill, if carried, will not diminish the power of the Crown, or add to the power of the people, so much as this measure.

At the same time I believe that it will conduce to good government. I have great confidence in the wisdom of the nation at large, and in the stability which public contentment gives, when based on timely reformatations and on voluntary abandonment of proved abuses.

On one point I feel quite certain. This proposal, if made by the Ministers of the Crown, and with the consent of the Crown, will eclipse all other reforms, and will be regarded as the greatest boon conferred on the nation since bread was freed from taxation.

Ponder this matter well. It involves great results. I am deeply impressed with its importance, and in a letter I can only glance at the prominent points. But I am ready and willing to discuss it with you more at large, and I should wish to consult Lord Aberdeen, when after such discussion the subject is ripe for decision, before it is launched into the whirlpool of the Cabinet.

Then follows a postscript of importance :

I have omitted in its proper place, in the official part of the question, an observation which presses very strongly on my mind. The present system of superannuation is vicious ; those who contribute to the fund and have claims upon it are dissatisfied ; the public who bear the weight of the burden are indifferently served.

The root of the evil is promotion by seniority, which is practically the rule, apart from merit. I have known first-class clerks who have been incompetent from their first entry into the service, and who for thirty years have never done a real day's work. After receiving salaries of £700 or £800 a year they have retired on a high scale of superannuation allowance, while those of first-rate abilities plod on with no hope of rising by their exertions, and with no expectation of a greater ultimate reward at the close of their labours than that which is frequently granted to the stupid and the indolent. The effect of this system is to reduce all to a common level of intellect and of exertion, and that a very low one.

But the whole aspect of the case would be entirely changed if the amount to be granted to superannuated public servants were made dependent on the character of their service. The principle indeed is recognised in the Superannuation Act, but the application of it is frustrated by the want of a faithful and systematic record of the merits of the public servants in the offices to which they are attached.

I cannot doubt that the real security would be found in the first admission to the public service being made dependent on merit ascertained by impartial examination, and in a system of organised probation, and of constant record of abilities, conduct, and assiduity, duly attested by the signature and under the responsibility of the head of each department. Good service pensions and honorary distinctions might then be safely granted, on sure grounds and with the best effect, and the scale of retiring allowances might be arranged according to different degrees of merit.

Such a system as this, in combination with promotion by merit and not for seniority, would solve the difficulty of the superannuation question, and would rapidly

exalt the character and the attainments of the civil servants of the public.

There is no part of the entire Report, full and able as it is, which appears to me more entitled than this to attention.

In this letter, and in others that followed, Sir James Graham, whose experience and skill in administration were unrivalled, points out faithfully some difficulties and drawbacks of a general system of first selection by open competition. But, to his credit, he rose at once to a just conception of the magnitude and paramount importance of what Mr. Gladstone calls ‘*his* contribution to Parliamentary reform.’ He also promised his best aid to bring it into shape and effect.

What encouragement Mr. Gladstone must have drawn from such an answer may perhaps best be judged by contrast. A fortnight later he made bold to write on the same subject to another colleague, Lord John Russell, ‘a letter of incomparable trenchancy and force.’¹

Like Sir James, Lord John answered by return of post, but in these terms :

I hope no change will be made, and I certainly must protest against it.

In this Lord John stood true to the Whig tradition that one of the most useful instruments of Government is patronage.

But the reform was carried, and works well.

¹ Morley’s *Gladstone*, i. 511.

CHAPTER X

1853-54

RUSSIAN WAR

Constantinople—The Eastern Question—Nicholas—Cabinet Correspondence—Stratford Canning and the Czar—Sir George Seymour—Russian Fortresses and Fleet—Turkey declares War—Sir Edmund Lyons—Sinope—Public Excitement—Black Sea—Sir Charles Napier—The Baltic—Bomarsund—Sweaborg.

THE first bright year of Lord Aberdeen's Government in most memories shows pale beside the second year, of impending and of actual war.

Wars arise—as Aristotle says of civil discords ¹—on petty occasions, but not for petty objects. It was so with the Russian War of 1854-56.

The occasion was trivial, a contention of Latin and Greek monks for the custody of holy places. The interests believed to be at stake were great.

When the first Christian Emperor of Rome, A.D. 324, wanted a new capital, he selected, for reasons geographical, military, and political, the unique site still named after him—Constantinople.

There for eleven centuries he and his successors reigned. But just four centuries before the outbreak of this war, the city being captured by the Ottoman Turks, many millions of European Christians came under the dominion

¹ Γίνονται αἱ στάσεις οὐ περὶ μικρῶν, ἀλλ' ἐκ μικρῶν στασιάζουσι δὲ περὶ μεγάλων. *Politics*, v. 3.

of an Asiatic and Mahometan ruler. How long this was to continue, and what should follow, was a question that now concerned all the Great Powers of Europe. It was known to them as 'The Eastern Question.'

On that subject in February, 1853, the Czar Nicholas, in conversation with the British Ambassador, spoke out his mind.

Turkey [he said] is falling to pieces. The sick man is dying. We must come to some understanding. I will not tolerate the permanent occupation of Constantinople by the Russians. It never shall be held by the English, or the French, or any other great nation. I never will permit an attempt to reconstruct a Byzantine Empire ; or such an extension of Greece as would make her a powerful State ; or the breaking-up of Turkey into little republics, asylums for the Kossuths and Mazzinis and other revolutionists of Europe. I would rather go to war.

So far in the negative. What the Czar would approve was this :

The Principalities are in fact an independent State, under my protection ; that might continue. Servia might receive the same form of government. So again with Bulgaria.

As to Egypt, I quite understand the importance of that territory to England. In the event of a distribution of the Ottoman succession upon the fall of the Empire, if you should take possession of Egypt, I shall have no objection to offer. I would say the same thing of Candia [Crete].

Such suggestions in private receiving no encouragement from the British Ambassador or Government, nothing came of them ; and when, a few months later, the French Emperor—with whatever motives—made claims for the

Latin as against the Greek Church, all that the Czar demanded for himself was :

No new rights, no increased authority, nothing for the protection of my co-religionists but what is already conceded to me by treaties . . . the maintenance of the *status quo* in all matters appertaining to the Greek Orthodox Church.¹

But these terms, being regarded, rightly or wrongly, with suspicion—lest protection by Russia of Greek Christians should be made a means of detaching them from the Turkish Empire—were not approved by the Great Powers, nor could they agree on any other terms acceptable to both the Sultan and the Czar.

The intricate history of the negotiations that so discredibly failed to avert war cannot be given here. It is well summarised by Lord Stanmore, in his short *Life of Lord Aberdeen* ; his recent *Life of Lord Herbert* adds interesting details ; and still more will be made clear whenever he may publish in full his father's private papers.

Sir James Graham's connection with the affair was threefold : as a leading member of the Cabinet which declared war ; as the Minister then responsible for the British Navy ; and in 1855–56 as opposed to continuance of the war.

In the Coalition Government opinions on the Eastern question diverged less, and were less on party lines, than might have been expected. Of Graham's chief correspondents within the Cabinet, two, Lord Aberdeen and Lord Clarendon, were as anxious as himself for peace ; two, Lord Palmerston and Lord John Russell, were more inclined to war.

¹ See Stanmore's *Life of Lord Herbert*, i. 185.

Lord Palmerston was always wanting to get nearer to the Russians. He writes :

May 29.—Walker's answers to your excellent queries make me wish more than ever that our fleet was cruising off the Dardanelles at this moment. We *must* give Stratford leave to send for it under certain and prescribed circumstances. Aberdeen has now less objection to this than he had.

May 31.—We have now determined to give Lord Stratford power to call up our squadron for the defence of Constantinople. Does it not follow that we should place that squadron as near as we properly can to the points which it may suddenly be called upon to defend ?

At Constantinople the representative of Great Britain, Lord Stratford, was, unfortunately, the one diplomat in Europe least acceptable to the Czar. Twenty years before this time Lord Durham had warned Palmerston not to send him as Ambassador to St. Petersburg. Nesselrode had declared that 'he could not do business with him, he was so suspicious and susceptible,' and the Czar disliked him. In the words of Lord Durham :

Lord Palmerston was told that there was only one man in England to whom the Emperor objected [as Ambassador], namely, Canning. This was communicated in the most friendly way to Lord Palmerston by Lieven and myself, and before Lord Palmerston had even named Canning. In despite of this Palmerston appointed Canning, and even gazetted him, without conveying any notice of his intention to do so to Lord Grey. When remonstrated with by Lieven he said, 'Canning is of my party, and I must provide for him.' ¹

Naturally the Czar then refused to receive Canning. Palmerston had to provide for him somewhere else, and now after twenty years the mutual suspicions and ill-will between him and the Emperor conduced to war.

¹ *Life of Lord Durham*, by Stuart J. Reid, i. 315.

Graham replies to Palmerston :

ADMIRALTY, *June 1, 1853.*

I have seen Lord Aberdeen, and he will state to Clarendon the conditions which in his judgment it might be desirable to attach to sending the British fleet to Vourla, and to the grant of a discretionary power to Stratford Canning over its ultimate movement, which may involve the question of peace or war.

Our understanding with France in such circumstances ought not to rest on verbal declarations, and if it assume a more formal shape, our relations with Russia would not justify concealment of our fixed intention.

The question then arises, If Russia go to war with Turkey, are France and England prepared to take a part as principals in such a war on the side of Turkey ? This is the preliminary question to be decided, and the decision must in a great degree depend on the cause of quarrel.

We have waited so long, and as I think so prudently, that, before finally deciding the question now at issue, I should wish to know the exact circumstances which attended Prince Menschikoff's departure from Constantinople, what was his ultimatum, and whether at the last moment he used threats, or held out hopes of resumed negotiations under further instructions.

It is always easy to involve this country in war ; but the reaction of the public mind is speedy and violent, when the evils of war have become inevitable. To prevent the Russians reaching Constantinople is a British object of primary importance, which would justify many risks and great sacrifices. Nothing but the imminent danger of so great a disaster would be regarded as a sufficient plea for a sudden rupture with Russia.

These letters Sir James Graham showed to Lord Clarendon, adding :

Lord Aberdeen tells me he has had a long conversation with you, and I can confidently hope and believe that you will have settled the course to be adopted.

Lord Aberdeen wrote to Lord Clarendon to the same effect, adding :

I think our best prospect of success is to be found in the union of the four Powers, and in their firm but friendly representations at St. Petersburg. The authority given to Lord Stratford to call up the fleet to Constantinople is a fearful power to place in the hands of any minister, involving as it does the question of peace or war.¹

Lord Stratford himself wrote letters apparently peaceful, but to Graham's mind 'ominous' of war.

June 20.—Peace, as in your view so in mine, is the immediate object in view, and I hope to give proof of my attention to its interests by engaging the Turks to suspend their right of war on the entrance of the Russians into Moldavia, and to afford another chance for diplomatic arrangement, by referring in the first instance to their friends.

I cannot however conceal from myself that on failure of negotiations we shall stand in presence of a most painful alternative ; to wit, either the surrender to Russia of what constitutes essentially the Eastern question, or its maintenance by means of a struggle which may eventually bring the whole of our resources into action and hazard.

I should be delighted to see a middle course, but clearer eyes than mine must look for it, and things having come to their present pass there is no use and much danger in blinking the truth.

From Lord Clarendon

June 30.—Stratford says the Turks are firm, and much encouraged by the arrival of the fleets. He seems not to doubt that the Emperor means war, and will not recede. But Stratford's tone about using the fleet is very proper and pacific. Cowley says that all the news from Russia is bad, and the language of the Russians at Paris very warlike.

¹ Stanmore's *Life of Lord Aberdeen*, p. 224.

From Lord John Russell

July 4.—There is some awkwardness in allowing the Russians to play about in the Black Sea, and if they appear there in force I think the fleets should be in the Bosphorus. But that may be safely left to Lord Stratford. I share his opinions, and think the Emperor of Russia will not retreat.

In answer to Lord Stratford Graham wrote :

July 8.—The fleet on the whole is the most powerful one we have had in the Mediterranean for thirty years.

I have only a peace establishment at my command, and I must be prepared to watch the Baltic, and to guard our own shores. France also has intimated the hope that we shall protect her against a surprise in the Channel !

The united force of France and England at the mouth of the Dardanelles is sufficient to sweep the Black Sea, if the fatal necessity should arise. But I rely on your prudence and skill in averting it.

Dundas is ordered not to move without your previous concurrence, and his whole force is placed absolutely at your disposal. I am certain that you will wield this power with discretion, and in the spirit of peace. It will be a miserable end if Europe be convulsed in these latter days by a Holy War.

Graham continues his letters to the Foreign Secretary.

To Lord Clarendon

August 18.—Lord Aberdeen read to me Stratford Canning's letters addressed to you. The tone of them is harsh and ominous. He was hardening himself to resist the proposed note from Vienna, and, notwithstanding the peremptory order to the contrary, he is quite capable of advising the Turk to be refractory. In this case you should be ready to supersede him without the loss of a day, and to send either Bulwer or Howden, to give effect on the spot to the fixed purpose of the Allies.

Such supersession was the more easy as Canning

had been sent to Constantinople only on a temporary mission.

To the British Ambassador in Russia Graham wrote in peaceful strain :

To Sir Hamilton Seymour

ADMIRALTY, August 4.

I have sent an officer of first-rate ability as a surveyor, on whom I can entirely rely, to visit Cronstadt and the islands of Aland. I rely, however, much more on your pacific skill and exertions, and I am unwilling to abandon the hope that our amicable relations with Russia will not be brought to an untimely end.

But the answer breathes the spirit that tends to war.

From Sir Hamilton Seymour

ST. PETERSBURG, August 18.

The Russians are great rogues, and the Emperor, I fear, worthy of being at the head of such a people. I am ashamed to say that it will be almost painful to me if the thing is patched up without the Russians having been taught that Cronstadt and Sebastopol never were dipped in the Styx, whatever the rest of the Empire may have been. They sadly want a lesson, and I should have been glad had they got it before their fleet is better manned, and their naval fortresses better protected.

From better-informed quarters came a less light-hearted account of the Russian fortresses and fleet.

From Lord Clarendon

September 27, 1853.

You will be surprised, when you get Captain Washington's report, at the wonderfully efficient state in which he found the Russian fleet. There was not the slightest mystery ; he was shown everything, and one day his lioniser was the Grand Duke Constantine, of whom he has formed a very high opinion, finding him better acquainted with every detail of our navy than himself ;

having the lines of the *Agamemnon* and *Duke of Wellington* in his room, and predicting that the *Impérieuse* would beat the *Agamemnon*. The engine of their fastest steamer was made near St. Petersburg, and Captain Washington seemed thunderstruck at the general activity as well as the method of their proceedings. Five hundred guns at Cronstadt bearing on the anchorage, some of them for balls of 120 pounds.

We must not in future underrate the naval power of Russia.

Meanwhile Graham, ever since his return to the Admiralty, had been busy strengthening and manning the British Navy. He began now to look about for Commanders-in-chief.

A weak point in the British naval service was promotion by seniority, without regard to merit. Ten years earlier Sir James had written to Sir Robert Peel :

WHITEHALL, *December 21, 1844.*

You know my opinion with respect to adherence to seniority as the sole mode of attaining the rank of admiral. I cannot persuade myself that there is common sense in it, or that the prerogative of the Crown administered by responsible advisers ought to be so restrained, unless the wishes and feelings of worn-out admirals are to prevail over the interests of the public and the safety of the State.

Nevertheless the bad old system had remained, and almost every admiral was of an age better suited for superannuation than for active service.

In the Mediterranean the chief command was in the hands of Vice-Admiral Sir James Dundas, an active commander in the Baltic in 1807, and afterwards for some time member for Greenwich, but now entering on his seventieth year and contemplating retirement. To

strengthen his hands Sir James Graham chose a most efficient second in command, bringing him back to the naval from the diplomatic service.

He writes to Lord Clarendon :

September 25, 1853.—I must now look to my naval part in these operations. One point on which I am most anxious is the selection of a good rear-admiral to be second in command to Admiral Dundas, and to supply his place in case of accidents.

Sir Edmund Lyons is in my opinion the proper person. He is an excellent officer, and has a perfect knowledge of the scene of operations, and he is the fittest man for our present purpose. If Lord Aberdeen and you agree with me in this opinion, I wish that you would recall him from Stockholm without delay, intimating to him the service for which he is destined. I know that the first object of his ambition is a return to the active duties of his profession, and he will be ready at a moment's notice. We should have the advantage of personal communication with him as he passed through London.

Lord Clarendon wrote accordingly, and Sir Edmund, after a satisfactory interview with Sir James Graham, sailed at once for Constantinople, arriving there most opportunely just before the destruction of the Turkish fleet on November 30, at Sinope.

That event, with the public excitement that ensued, raised the question whether the allied fleets should enter the Black Sea. Lyons, being asked his opinion, answered that a protracted cruise in winter might impair the efficiency of the ships, and added that, if the Government desired a peaceful solution of the Eastern question, it was more likely to be attained by avoiding such provocation. But his prudent advice took little effect, owing to an outburst of popular indignation in England against what was somewhat absurdly called 'the massacre of

Sinope,' the public forgetting that in October the Turks had declared and begun war, and yet had left their fleet an easy prey to an attack from Sebastopol.

Graham himself wrote to Admiral Dundas :

The attack on Sinope has produced an immense effect on the public mind both in France and in England. It is difficult to put any restraint on the national desire to avenge what is regarded as a contempt and defiance of our flag. . . . Instructions will be sent by this mail to the Ambassadors of France and England which will direct the immediate occupation of the Black Sea by the combined fleets, to the exclusion of the Russian ships of war ; and, if no collision has taken place before you receive this letter, the execution of the new instructions may probably lead to that result.

It is probable that war may be declared by Russia, or that some indignity may be offered to the British flag which it may be necessary to punish.

Should any such opportunity present itself, I conclude that you will have your eye upon Sebastopol. That is a place where a blow might be struck which would be memorable in Europe, and which would settle the affairs of the East for some time to come.

I have been one of the most strenuous advocates of peace with Russia until the last moment ; but the Sinope attack and recent events have changed entirely the aspect of affairs. I am afraid that a rupture with Russia is inevitable, and if it must take place it is important to bring it to a close with decision and promptitude, so that the struggle may be ended in the Black Sea before the Baltic opens.

I wish to force nothing upon you in opposition to your own judgment ; but I will share your responsibilities, and I will not leave you in the lurch when you have given full effect to your own sense of public duty in a great emergency.

Instructions for the occupation of the Black Sea by the British and French fleets, ' to the exclusion of the

Russian ships of war,' might seem intended to provoke a collision. But the allied admirals were prudent, and Russia, whatever may have been her resentment, gave them no excuse for an act of war. They sent letters to the Russian admiral at Sebastopol announcing that they were there to protect the Ottoman territory and flag, and they hoped he would take no measures that might disturb the peace existing between England, France, and Russia. The Russian declined to open the letters, but courteously promised to forward them to headquarters.

The officer who had undertaken the mission (Captain Drummond) turned it to account by examining as best he could the sea defences of Sebastopol, and reported :

I considered the fortifications so strong as opposed to ships, that it would be impossible to enter the harbour and destroy the ships at anchor and the arsenal without the almost certain destruction of the attacking force. The only way to destroy the place completely would be to employ a large land force with artillery to co-operate with the ships.

An opinion confirmed by experience in the Baltic, as in the Black Sea.

For the chief command in the Baltic, among the elderly candidates, the choice fell on Sir Charles Napier, then aged sixty-eight. He was thus recommended :

To the Queen

ADMIRALTY, *February 9, 1854.*

Sir James Graham with humble duty begs to lay before your Majesty certain important considerations discussed at the Cabinet yesterday with respect to the selection of a Commander-in-chief for the fleet about to be assembled for service in the Baltic.

The number of ships to be employed, and the probable

co-operation of a French squadron, renders the appointment of an Admiral or of a Vice-Admiral indispensably necessary.

Of Admirals there are but two whom Sir James Graham could venture to recommend as eligible for this important command. These two are Lord Dundonald and Sir William Parker.

Lord Dundonald is seventy-nine years of age, and though his energies and faculties are unbroken, and with his accustomed courage he volunteers for the service, yet on the whole there is reason to apprehend that he might deeply commit the force under his command in some desperate enterprise, where the chances of success would not counteract the risk of failure and of the fatal consequences which might ensue. Age has not abated the adventurous spirit of this gallant officer, which no authority could restrain; and being uncontrollable it might lead to most unfortunate results. The Cabinet, on the most careful review of the entire question, decided that the appointment of Lord Dundonald was not expedient.

Sir William Parker's health is failing. He has served in every climate and quarter of the globe; he desires rest, and well deserves it.

Of Vice-Admirals also there are but two whose fitness for this command has come under discussion. These are Sir George Seymour and Sir Charles Napier.

Sir George Seymour is absent in North America . . . and Sir James Graham could not advise that the command of the North Sea Fleet should be kept open to await his return. On the contrary, not a day should now be lost for completing the equipment and arrangement of a squadron for the Baltic, and the first step is the nomination of a Commander-in-chief.

The choice would seem to fall on Sir Charles Napier, and though this appointment may be open to some objections, it is strongly recommended by many considerations.

Sir Charles Napier is an excellent seaman, and combines boldness with discretion. He has served in large squadrons, and he has commanded them. As a second he may not have been submissive, as a chief he has been successful in command. This appointment will give confidence both to officers and men, and his name is not unknown

both to enemies and allies. If he has the faults of his family, he is not without their virtues. Courage, genius, love of country, are not wanting, and the weighty responsibilities of a high command, without depressing him, would give steadiness to his demeanour.

He behaved ill to Lord John Russell, and to Sir Francis Baring, and on shore he has given just cause of complaint. But at sea and in command he is a different person, and Lord John Russell in the Cabinet yesterday, regardless of all former displeasure, pronounced an opinion favourable to the appointment. Lord Aberdeen also, together with the entire Cabinet, came to the same conclusion; and Sir James Graham, on their behalf and in concurrence with his own opinion, ventures to ask the permission of your Majesty to appoint Sir Charles Napier to this important naval command.

The Queen approved, and all began well.

ADMIRALTY, *March 31, 1854.*

Sir James Graham with humble duty hastens to lay before your Majesty the enclosed despatches and letters from Sir C. Napier. They are highly satisfactory. All exit from the Baltic is now blocked by your Majesty's Fleet; and the whole of the Russian Naval Force is still enclosed in impenetrable ice in the Gulf of Finland. Your Majesty's Fleet will have time to prepare and to be reinforced before the commencement of active operations; and already the presence of this powerful squadron has produced a visible effect on the counsels at Stockholm.¹

From the Queen

April 2, 1854.

In consequence of what the Queen said last night to Lord Aberdeen about Sir James Graham, perhaps he would without delay tell him of the Queen's intention.

The admirable and energetic manner in which Sir James has got ready the noble fleets for the Baltic and Black Sea, and in which he carries on the administration of the Admiralty at this very important moment, is of

¹ Later on Sweden joined the Alliance.

the greatest value to the country, and deserving of the highest praise.

The Queen is anxious to mark her sense of this by conferring on him the Civil Grand Cross of the Bath.

To Lord Aberdeen

ADMIRALTY, *April 3, 1854.*

I feel deeply the gratifying expressions with which the Queen in her letter to you has been pleased to notify her approbation of my endeavours to serve her Majesty in this department. The reward which she graciously intends to bestow on me is honourable in itself, and worthy of services more effective than any which I have been able to perform.

I shall receive the honour with gratitude as a proof of Her Majesty's indulgent favour, rendered doubly acceptable by the terms in which my humble efforts to do my duty have been commended by Her Majesty.

The private correspondence between the First Lord and his Admiral was conducted for many months with mutual respect and satisfaction, the main objects in view being well defined.

To Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Napier

April 10, 1854.—I rely on your prudence in not knocking your head against stone walls prematurely, or without the fair prospect of attaining some object worthy of the risk and the loss which when you attack fortresses with ships are serious and inevitable.

May 1.—You will have a force amply sufficient to close the Gulf of Finland and, as I hope, to prevent the junction of the two divisions of the Russian fleet from Cronstadt with the squadron which has wintered at Sweaborg. Your force will, I think, be large enough to render the escape of any Russian squadron from the Baltic impossible, and to leave us quite at our ease in England,¹ though we may have no large reserve ready on our shores.

¹ And the French in France. See page 222.

The close blockade is the primary object, and all other operations must be secondary to this.

I by no means contemplate an attack either on Sweaborg or on Cronstadt. I believe them to be all but impregnable from the sea, and none but a very large army could co-operate by land efficiently in presence of such a force as Russia could easily concentrate for defence of the approaches to her capital.

If, then, you have no means but naval at your command, you must consider well before you attempt any attack on the Russian squadrons in their strongholds.

May 2.—The French Admiral has some high-sounding instructions, in which mention is made of attacking St. Petersburg, ‘if it be within the power of man.’ You will observe that it is not an instruction to make the attack, but the statement of a wish that it were possible—two very different things, and your duty does not extend to the impossible.

May 15.—I am anxious to hear your opinions and intentions when you have looked at Sweaborg, and have entered the Gulf of Finland. I am afraid that the Russians are much too cautious to come out and meet you.

June 20.—I am well aware of all the difficulties of your position, and of the impossibility of triumphing over an enemy who will not fight you, but you will discipline our fleet, and make our officers and men more fit and ready for any service. It is a disgrace to Russia that she does not show a ship in her own waters, and that she is driven to seek for safety under the shelter of her fortresses. It would be madness to play her game, and to rush headlong on her granite walls, risking our naval superiority, with all the fatal consequences of defeat in an unequal contest of wood against stone.

I had reliance on your prudence, which was doubted. Your brilliant courage was proved long ago. You will now show the world that you possess a combination of those great virtues which are necessary to make a consummate Commander-in-chief.

The Admiral on his side had written :

April 12.—You have done wonders in collecting this

force, and I think I can make head even if the French do not come.

April 20.—As you observe, the delay has given us time to improve the squadron, and God knows it was wanted.

May 16.—I have no fear of the Russian fleet, or any of them, escaping from the Baltic. I have watched them too well for that.

June 12.—I am at anchor off Sweaborg. It is now unassailable by ships, and I doubt whether it could be got hold of even by a large army.

The primary object, the close blockade, being accomplished, Sir James now began to extend his views to attacks to be supported by French troops.

To Sir Charles Napier

July 2.—I am disposed to begin with Bomarsund, but you and the French Admiral must decide. Your success there may be reduced to a certainty, and it will be the first hard blow in the battle.

July 11.—Sweaborg, if it were possible, would be a noble prize. But on no account be led into any desperate attempt, and above all things avoid the least risk of the Russian fleet slipping out of the Gulf of Finland, when your back is turned.

August 1.—I am aware that Bomarsund presents difficulties, but I feel certain that you will overcome them.

August 8.—Until this success is accomplished, it would be premature to contemplate further measures, but I rely on your giving me the earliest information of what you are disposed to undertake, after full consultation with the French General and Admiral.

August 22.—I congratulate you sincerely on the success of your operations before Bomarsund, and I highly commend your prudence and wisdom in effecting the capture of this stronghold of the enemy without the loss of a ship, or of many lives.

I shall be anxious to hear what is your next move. Transports for the French troops will be joining you every day, until you have ample means of moving the whole

body. I think that you might beat up Russian quarters somewhere with advantage. Surely either Abo or Revel is open to attack.

August 25.—I am more than satisfied with your proceedings. I am delighted with the prudence and sound judgment which you have evinced. It would have been a miserable want of firmness had you yielded to clamour, and sacrificed many valuable lives in an attempt to destroy by naval means works which were certain to fall to an attack by land.

I am well pleased also with the promptitude with which you have sent back the line-of-battle ships and the steamers. The work has been well done, and I gladly give you the utmost credit for it.

The Admiral now wrote :

August 29.—There is no intention of going to Abo. The French are all in a hurry to get home as fast as they can, so I shall say no more about it. It would lead to discussion which would lead to nothing.

September 14.—I am glad my proceedings give you so much satisfaction. I shall not be led into follies by people who talk big, but, were they in a position to act, would probably do nothing. Many of such people are in the fleet.

Meanwhile Graham had written :

September 12.—We know nothing with certainty respecting the return of the French Fleet from the Baltic. I hope, however, that the French Admiral with his line-of-battle ships will be still within your power of communicating with him, for General Niel's letter, which you transmitted to us, renders it necessary that you should distinctly and officially raise the question whether the Admiral concurs in the opinion entertained by the French military authorities, that Sweaborg may be attacked with success by naval means alone. If the French Admiral repudiate the suggestion of the French General, he ought to be brought to book, and in writing avow that the operation is too hazardous.

September 22.—Your Naval Council of War has declared Sweaborg unassailable at this season of the year with the means of attack now at your disposal. This unanimous opinion is recorded; the French Admirals concur with you in rejecting the suggestion of the French Generals, which pointed to a naval bombardment of the forts by line-of-battle ships, and nothing now remains to be done before winter but to keep the Russian Fleet within the Gulf of Finland until ice shall render it immovable.

The moral effect of their coming outside that Gulf, and appearing triumphant in the Baltic, would be fatal to the last degree. It would bring our whole summer operations into contempt, and would render the large force which we sent to blockade them ridiculous, when we hastened to withdraw it while the sea was yet open. I am aware of the dangers of that sea after the Equinox, but in former wars we have remained there as late as November, and steam and the screw give facilities for blockading, and power of movement in difficult circumstances, heretofore unknown.

September 26.—I was not prepared for the intelligence that Admiral Parseval has left you with all his sailing ships. We shall be disgraced if we allow a Russian ship of war to pass from the Gulf into the open sea before winter sets in. This matter has become a point of honour which affects our moral character and credit; and you must hold on, and not retreat to the south till you are sure that the Russian Fleet cannot move to the westward.

That you are left alone is a consideration which may weigh with the French, but it ought not to influence our decision.

It may be necessary to rest satisfied with the destruction of Bomarsund; and the retreat of the French fleet and army renders the discussion of any other active operations before winter now superfluous. But the maintenance of the blockade is within our power, and it must not be relinquished until the last moment. If the Russians think fit to attack you because your force has been so much diminished, I still have no doubt that they will rue the day, and never return into harbour.

So far there had been no complaint on either side. A

good many of the officers, new to the severe conditions of service in war, and finding Napier's views of necessary discipline irksome, had grumbled, and he had reported severely on their neglect of obvious duties, especially in failing to keep company, and to obey, or even to observe, signals from the flagship. This Graham had met by arming Napier with full powers.

April 10.—If there be any slackness or want of ready compliance on the part of the captains under your command, and if you think an example necessary, your authority shall be supported, let the penalty fall on whom it may. I say this under the firm persuasion that you will have recourse to such a measure of discipline reluctantly, with caution, and after repeated warnings.

To which Napier had replied :

April 21.—The authority you give me is great, and I should be loath to put it in force. I would rather send the ship home, and you could remove the captain. I believe I am getting too 'discreet,' and would like to have the views of the Admiralty on this head.

There had been also sent on from Paris a protest from the French Admiral against Napier's behaviour to him. To this Napier with good-humour replied :

July 10.—I will do my best with the French Admiral, but they are kittle cattle to shoe behind.

August 23.—Give yourself no uneasiness about the French Admiral and General. I have difficulty in keeping the former in good humour, but none with the latter. But now it is cured, as the Admiral and General don't like each other, and they draw towards me.

It was not till October that there arose between the Commander-in-chief and the Admiralty Board, and afterwards the First Lord personally, a painful altercation,

which one would gladly forget, but which became so public as to require notice.

The main design of shutting up the Russian Fleet till winter in their strongholds, blockading their ports, and destroying their commerce had been perfectly accomplished, and further, Bomarsund had been destroyed. This had led to hopes of more such achievements, and by orders from home reconnaissances had been made of Revel and Abo, of Cronstadt, and especially of Sweaborg. A French general, Niel, and Brigadier (afterwards Sir Harry) Jones, had given their opinions that it would be possible to reduce that fortress, if only ships were laid close enough to the granite walls. But in September Sir James had accepted the unanimous decision of an English and French Naval Council of War, that nothing more should be attempted before winter, save measures necessary to prevent egress of the Russian Fleet. So things stood when, after a fresh reconnaissance by Napier in person, to the surprise of the Admiralty he himself reported to them :

I beg their lordships will not suppose for a moment that Sweaborg cannot be attacked. I think it can ; but it must be with caution and with judgment.

In the same despatch, September 25, he went on to describe in detail how he would proceed.

To this advice the Admiralty replied :

October 4.—Your renewed reconnaissance of Sweaborg gives rise to pressing and serious considerations. . . .

You express an opinion that if your plan of attack by the ships were adopted, you are quite certain that the fortress would be laid in ruins, and most probably an entrance opened to the ships.

What, then, are the obstacles to the immediate attempt?

If the diminution of your force be one, we have reason to believe that the French Fleet has been ordered to rejoin you off Sweaborg. . . .

Then follows the very simple executive order, that the Commander-in-chief on the spot must use his own discretion.

This order is founded entirely on your own last report. The final decision must rest entirely with yourself.

If the attack on Sweaborg in present circumstances be desperate, it must on no account be undertaken by you.

If, calculating the ordinary chances of war, and on a full consideration of the strength of the enemy's fortresses and fleets, you shall still be of opinion that Sweaborg can be laid in ruins, it will be your duty, with the concurrence of the French Admiral, not to omit the opportunity.

In reply the Admiral wrote that his despatch had been misunderstood.

October 10.—My second reconnaissance was never intended to open a new view. The view I first took and the last were the same.

Their Lordships say the final decision must rest with me. . . . I look upon it that no man in his senses would undertake to attack Sweaborg at this season of the year.

In a private letter to Sir James Graham the Admiral regrets having applied officially the strong epithet 'mad' to the Chief Engineer's report, but maintains his own opinion.

October 3.—I am sorry I used such a strong expression on General Jones's report, and I have sent home another letter correcting it. But, you must allow, an Engineer officer giving the opinion which General Jones gave—which necessarily led to the council of war, and I have no doubt brought down upon me the abuse of the Press—was most provoking.

Get a chart, and look how Sweaborg is hedged in with sunken rocks, and then fancy ships laying amongst them at this season of the year; and one would be led to suppose that no man in his senses could really believe what he stated, which I have no doubt he is now sorry for.

But that report has no doubt got wind, and has begot a want of confidence in the conduct of the admirals, and has much damaged their reputation not only in the opinion of the public, but in your opinion, and in the Board's also. They will say the admirals are afraid to attack Sweaborg, but an English engineer thinks it could be done, and that this was a proper season. *Ergo*: they are a couple of old women.

A month later Sir Charles Napier imputes motives.

November 6.—There is not a word in either my public or private letters to justify the construction that you and the Admiralty have thought proper to put on them. . . .

Enough has not been done to satisfy 'an impatient public,' as you called them. Some one must be blamed, and I am the chosen one. But I will not allow myself to be crushed, because I could not do impossibilities.

All this stir has been caused by the reports of two Engineers—one French and the other English, diametrically opposed to each other—because they suited the public taste; in addition to which was the report of the capture of Sebastopol—*not yet taken*, though the fleet there is assisted by an army of 70,000 men in a fine climate.¹ And I have been expected to take places much stronger with a fleet alone. And the same people who so often warned me against unnecessarily risking my fleet are now dissatisfied because I do not expose them to certain destruction.

Sir Charles wrote later also to the Admiralty:

Their Lordships say no censure has been conveyed on any point requiring further investigation.

¹ The Crimean climate in November.

I beg to differ from their Lordships.

The points on which an investigation of my conduct is necessary are—

Whether I was right or wrong in agreeing with a Marshal of France, a General of Engineers, and a French Admiral, in rejecting the impracticable plan of an English Brigadier-General of Engineers for attacking Sweaborg, with which decision the Admiralty have expressed their discontent ;

Whether the report of my second reconnaissance of Sweaborg deserves the construction their Lordships thought fit to give it, and indeed changed the sense and meaning of it altogether to make out a case against me, using at the same time language to goad me to attack Sweaborg contrary to my judgment, contrary to the judgment of the French Admiral, and contrary to the judgment of my own Admirals, whom I was ordered to consult. . . .

Notwithstanding all the explanations I gave to their Lordships in public letters, and to Sir James Graham in private letters, they persisted in writing to me in a style that might have done for a man who either did not know his duty or was afraid to do it, but not to a man of my character and services. . . .

I can quite understand that their Lordships wish to avoid an investigation, for they are quite aware that my conduct will be proved creditable to me, and very different to their Lordships'.

The Board replied :

January 13.—Although my Lords upon some occasions have not been enabled to express the same satisfaction at receiving your reports which they have directed to be conveyed to you upon others, they have only to repeat that no censure has been passed upon your conduct in reference to the operations of the fleet under your orders. . . .

They consider that no inquiry into your conduct is necessary, and they entirely decline to submit a controversy raised by an officer under their orders to the decision of a court-martial.

Had the Board thought it becoming to answer Napier's accusation that they had, as he said, 'used language to goad me to attack Sweaborg contrary to my judgment,' they need only have quoted their instruction to him :

This order is founded entirely on your last report. The final decision must rest wholly with yourself.

If motives were to be discussed, the Board seem to have suspected that 'the abuse of the Press' had in some degree inspired the Admiral's report of September 25.

I beg their Lordships not to suppose for a moment that Sweaborg cannot be attacked. I think it can, but it must be with caution and judgment.

This paragraph, quoted alone, would read very differently from his two earlier reports in May and in June, that Sweaborg was 'unassailable.'

In any case the Board of Admiralty had resolved that responsibility for advising against an attack must rest not with them at home, but with the Naval Commanders-in-chief on the spot. And this they effected, for Napier's later despatches placed it beyond doubt that he and his brother admirals, to the last as at first, condemned the schemes of attack proposed.

During this unhappy controversy Sir James Graham's attention was much absorbed by events in the Crimea, which demand another chapter.

CHAPTER XI

INVASION OF THE CRIMEA

1854-55

Who inspired the Invasion?—Kinglake's Answer—Graham's Share—
Delenda est Sebastopol—Letters to Raglan, Dundas, and Lyons
—Disinclination overcome—Mentschikoff's Defence—Wood
against Stone—'Agamemnon' and 'Rodney'—Duke of Newcastle
and Dundas—Graham sustains Dundas—Lyons—Sufferings of
the Army—*The Times*.

THE chief historian of 'The Invasion of the Crimea' describes it as inspired by one Minister and one journal.

It would seem [he writes] that at first the Duke of Newcastle was the only member of the Government who was fired with a great eagerness for the destruction of Sebastopol. . . . But impending over the councils of all the ostensible rulers there was an authority not deriving from the Queen or from Parliament.

For the Duke's great eagerness the date assigned—'at first'—is vague. No letter of his is given before his official despatch of June 29, authorised by a united Cabinet. For the order previously issued by *The Times* Mr. Kinglake names the day and hour.

On the morning of the 15th of June the great newspaper declared that 'the grand political and military objects of the war could not be attained as long as Sebastopol and the Russian Fleet were in existence.' . . . Before the seventh day from the manifesto the country had made

answer to the appeal, and on the 22nd of June the great newspaper, informed with the deep will of the people, laid it down that 'Sebastopol was the keystone, etc.'

That was in June, 1854. But six months earlier, in December, 1853, the First Lord of the Admiralty had written to the Commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean :

Should any opportunity present itself, I conclude that you will have your eye upon Sebastopol. That is a place where a blow might be struck which would be memorable in Europe, and which would settle the affairs of the East for some time to come.

And in a similar spirit the Foreign Secretary, Lord Clarendon, had informed Graham :

December 30, 1853.—I told Cowley that if war was declared a decisive blow ought to be quickly struck, and that I hoped Admiral Hamelin would have instructions to join us in our attack on Sebastopol. Cowley asks me in return if I can send him confidentially a copy of your instructions to Admiral Dundas.

But the best proof that even before the ultimatum was sent in to the Czar, and three months before *The Times* issued its mandate, Graham was intent on the invasion, is this :

To Lord Clarendon

The operation which will be for ever memorable and decisive is the capture and destruction of Sebastopol. On this my heart is set. The eye-tooth of the bear must be drawn, and until his fleet and naval arsenal in the Black Sea are destroyed there is no safety for Constantinople, no security for the peace of Europe.

Graham's own copy of this is docketed and dated 'Delenda est Sebastopol, 1 March, 1854.'

Further evidence of the active interest he had taken in thinking out this great design is supplied by his early correspondence with Raglan and Lyons.

To Lord Raglan

ADMIRALTY, *May 8, 1854.*

I cannot venture to form an opinion sitting here as to what is possible ; I only know what is most desirable ; and the destruction of the Russian fleet and the capture of Sebastopol are the knock-down blows which would win the battle in the shortest time and with the greatest certainty. But everything depends on the force which Russia can assemble in the Crimea, and on the force which you can bring to the attack. The strength also of the works at Sebastopol on the land side, and the facilities for disembarking an army, and for keeping up a constant communication with the fleet and transports in a safe anchorage close at hand, are vital questions, on which the decisions must turn, and concerning which our information here is most imperfect and unsatisfactory.

I trust that all the naval authorities will co-operate most cordially with you. The strictest injunctions on my part have not been wanting.

From Sir Edmund Lyons

April 6.—You have made a glorious beginning, and astonished the world with the rapidity with which you have sent forth fleet and troops. But the little knowledge I have of human nature leads me to believe that the Emperor will not knock under until he has had some hard blows, and certainly one of the hardest blows he could have would be the destruction of his fleet and arsenal of Sebastopol.

From Lord Clarendon

Thanks for the Admiral's letter. I like a man so ready at any hour for anything.

To Sir Edmund Lyons

June 13.—I am of your opinion, that no decisive blow

will have been struck while Sebastopol remains intact and the Russian Fleet unassailed.

These objects are not within our reach unless a large army be prepared to co-operate with the fleet, and any such operation must depend on the tide of war in Bulgaria. But Sebastopol is the point to which our views and ultimate efforts should be directed.

Every preparation should be quietly made which is necessary to the success of disembarkation in the Crimea, so that, if at any moment the opportunity should present itself, the means may not be wanting.

July 2.—My fixed purpose, from which I have never swerved, is the capture of Sebastopol and the destruction of the enemy's fleet. You will agree with me in this, and we must never rest until this grand object is accomplished. All other enterprises are secondary to it, and must be made subservient to our principal design. The choice of the best place for disembarkation is a matter of great urgency. I have written to Admiral Dundas very fully upon it, and I doubt not he will communicate to you my views. I hope that Lord Raglan will cordially adopt them. My belief is that the sooner the attack is made the better, and from Varna the descent may be so sudden as to partake of the nature of a surprise.

Familiar with such letters, the biographer of Sir Edmund Lyons remarks :

We may presume that this undertaking was urged in the Cabinet at home with equal persistence, and we can imagine the effect it must have produced.

In the mind of one member at least of that body there was no hesitation, no fear of success, no doubt as to what should be done at this juncture. The influence of a man who knows his own mind is always great. In this case I doubt not it turned the scale. The expedition to the Crimea was decided upon, and orders to that effect despatched to Lord Raglan.¹

After the Cabinet decision Sir James Graham and Sir

Life of Lord Lyons, by Captain S. Eardley-Wilmot, R.N.

Edmund Lyons never ceased to urge this one great enterprise against grave doubts and provoking slackness on the part of others in command.

Of Admiral Dundas Mr. Kinglake does not scruple to say :

I am sure that he believed the war to be extremely foolish. . . . He thoroughly disapproved the project of invasion, and he said so in plain words.

Of Admiral Hamelin :

It was understood that he disapproved the expedition.

Of Omar Pacha :

It was known that he deprecated the proposed invasion.

Of St. Arnaud, advised by Trochu :

If the English should decide against the project, he would be well content, and perhaps much relieved.

And of Lord Raglan :

He persuaded himself into the belief that he would be justified in foregoing his own opinion, and acceding to the will of the Home Government.

Such was the disinclination against which the zeal of Graham and of Lyons had to contend.

At last, and mainly by their unflagging perseverance, on September 18 the landing in the Crimea was achieved with perfect success. On the 19th the allied armies began their march towards Sebastopol ; on the 20th they gained the victory of the Alma ; on the 23rd they pursued their march, the allied fleet moving with them southward along the coast.

But meanwhile, on September 22, by a prompt and wise decision of Prince Mentschikoff, five Russian sail of the line and two frigates had been sunk across the entrance of the harbour of Sebastopol. By this the Russian fleet was doomed to inaction ; but their great arsenal was thenceforth safe from any formidable attack by sea. As regards this disappointment Sir James Graham, it appears, shared the opinion of the French Admiral, that by more foresight and celerity the allied fleets might have entered the harbour and destroyed the arsenal.

To Lord John Russell

ADMIRALTY, *November 7, 1854.*

I assent to the justice of your observations.

I think that too little was done by the combined fleet on the day of the battle of Alma, while the harbour of Sebastopol was still open. I agree with Admiral Hamelin in thinking that the fleet might have run up the harbour and taken the place before the barricade obstructed the entrance, with no greater loss or danger than they encountered in their attack on the batteries outside on the 17th, when the obstruction to the entrance by the sunken vessels was complete.

I doubt also the prudence [later] of landing all the marines, and drawing largely from the complements of all the line-of-battle ships. It would have been safer to have disarmed and dismantled some, and to have kept the remainder in a perfect and efficient state. On the 17th all the line-of-battle ships fought with only two-thirds of their crews on board, and without their marines. These were fatal odds against the efficiency of the ships engaged.

This Board has commended the gallantry of the officers and men in the attack on the batteries on the 17th ; but (without censure) they have recorded their opinion that the strength and efficiency of the fleet were impaired by landing so large a portion of the crews of all the ships of the line.

Admiral Dundas had been most unwilling to let his wooden ships engage stone forts of great strength, and it was for the moral rather than for any expected physical effect that on October 17 the fleet took part in the bombardment. The majority of the ships were not laid near enough to make any impression on the walls. The nearest were Sir Edmund Lyons's ship the *Agamemnon*, and the *Rodney* commanded by a brother of Sir James, last mentioned in 1813 as a 'promising youngster.' He now fulfilled the promise. Lyons writes :

H.M.S. 'AGAMEMNON,' KATSCHA, *October 18.*

Lord Raglan's despatches will inform you that the armies opened their fire upon Sebastopol yesterday. I fear not with so much effect as was expected, in consequence of two magazines of powder having exploded in the French lines.

The fire from our batteries seemed to me to be tremendous throughout the day, and so it is at the moment I am writing.

Admiral Dundas' despatch will of course describe to you the part taken by the fleet under his command. But I cannot resist the desire I have to tell you that towards the close of the day, when the *Agamemnon* and my constant friend and gallant supporter Captain Dacres in the *Sanspareil* were alone and sorely under the fire of Fort Constantine and three other batteries, your brave brother came to our support most nobly, and placed the *Rodney* so as to take off a large share of the fire from us ; and I wished you could have heard the praises bestowed upon him from all on the poop of the *Agamemnon*, as he passed majestically by us, and approached even a few yards nearer the great battery than the *Agamemnon*, which I had thought hardly possible, for she had only two feet and a half of water under her keel.

At this moment a shell set fire to the steamer that was lashed alongside the *Rodney*, and I saw that the least mischance might throw all three ships aground

under the batteries, if I had not withdrawn the *Agamemnon* and *Sanspareil*. I therefore did so, just as the sun was setting, and for nearly an hour afterwards I heard the *Rodney*, as well as the *Queen* and *Bellerophon*, which had followed the example so nobly set by the *Rodney*, maintaining a smart fire.

I am sure you will be glad to know that the French officers of all ranks are loud in their expressions of satisfaction at the position I took up for their support. Admirals Hamelin and Bruat said to-day, in the presence of some of our captains, '*L'Agamemnon et le Sanspareil étaient superbes tous les deux—oui, superbes c'est le mot.*'

I had written thus far when I learned from Captain Graham that the *Rodney* was on shore for an hour, and paid dearly—not in killed and wounded, I am happy to say—for her captain's generous and brave conduct.

I am more than ever confirmed in my opinion that ships can do nothing destructive to stone batteries at a greater distance than 500 yards. The *Agamemnon* alone fired 3,250 shot at Fort Constantine, and we have superior captains of guns trained by Sir Thomas Maitland, and yet we did little more than kill men, silence the fire at intervals, and give the walls the smallpox—for such is the appearance of the high and extensive walls where the numerous shot struck.

The last remark confirms the judgment of Admiral Dundas, that for any physical effect upon the forts bombardment by ships would be useless. He had consented to it, but only under pressure from Raglan, inspired in part by Lyons.

At this date Kinglake makes the surprising statement that, in a private letter to the Commander-in-chief of the Army, the Secretary of State for War had gone so far as to intimate that, if Sir Edmund in concert with Lord Raglan would take upon himself to act independently of his chief, he, the Duke of Newcastle, would support him.

That a Secretary of State can have done so needs proof, and Kinglake had not before him the letter in question, dated October 9. But he had a memorandum by the late George Loch, M.P., that Lyons told him 'he had determined to take upon himself to act independently,' and that 'in this he acted by the advice of Lord Raglan,' which, however, Kinglake himself did not believe. But the chief evidence is a letter from the Duke, who, after reading Mr. Loch's account, wrote to him :

January 10, 1863.—What is related was done under secret instructions from me, sent (most irregularly of course but, as I thought, justifiably on account of the imminent danger) without the knowledge of my colleagues.

Whatever the letter may have been, it was passed on to Lyons, and Kinglake imagines also to Graham. But of that there is no trace among Graham's papers. About the date in question Lyons writes to him two letters :

October 13.—I confess that I am not in very good spirits, for Admiral Dundas writes to me that, after having 'deeply considered' my wish to rejoin his flag, he cannot sanction my leaving Balaklava.

It is true that he makes no allusion to any intention of attacking the batteries, and I hear from captains in his fleet that he thinks it would not be safe or proper to do so. But I know that Lord Raglan intends to ask him how far he can count upon the co-operation of the fleet on the day of assault, and if he should consider it consistent with his duty to co-operate, as I hope and trust he may, I can hardly believe that he would leave me here. So I live in hopes that all may come right.

And again the day before the attack.

October 16.—You will be glad to hear that Lord Raglan

has made a successful application to Admiral Dundas for the co-operation of the fleet, and that I am to have my share.

I hope I shall be able to persuade the French generals that our attack should be on the day of the *assault*, instead of the day of opening fire, seeing that we have not a large supply of shot for a proper attack on two days. My only fear is that I may not find them in their quarters to-day, and to-morrow is the day fixed for opening fire. It was at the close of the conference of the admirals that I elicited the fact of a paucity of shot. *That* was a curious—very curious—conference.

These letters do not suggest that Lyons had passed on to Graham the Duke's strange proposal.

If the Duke thought that Dundas should be superseded, his proper course was to say so to Graham. And that he did. Graham writes :

To Lord Aberdeen

Private.

BALMORAL, October 7, 1854.

I received to-day the two letters enclosed [one from the Duke of Newcastle].

The question of superseding Admiral Dundas at the present juncture is a very grave one. If it be done at all—as it appears to me—it must be done by the supreme authority at home, for cause shown, and on official responsibility. To delegate the power of superseding an admiral, in the presence of the enemy, to any one person sent out for this special purpose with discretionary authority to be exercised according to the view which he might take in private, is surely a novelty which it would be dangerous to introduce into the command and control of an honourable profession, very sensitive, and very jealous of its right to be judged by its own members.

Governments should be very cautious in England in their choice of naval and military commanders. The Crown may appoint whom it pleases : but practically

it cannot exercise the power of recall except for reasons which will stand the test of publicity and free discussion.

First, then, is it just to recall Admiral Dundas? I did not appoint him to his command. I should not have selected him. I am not satisfied with his late proceedings. I should be glad to see Sir Edmund Lyons in his place. I am anxious to take the first fair opportunity of effecting this object. Satisfy me that the public safety requires the immediate recall of Admiral Dundas, and show me any act of his which justifies this severity, and I will not shrink, as the head of the Board of Admiralty, from the responsible discharge of the painful duty.

I did it in the case of —; I am ready to do it in the case of Admiral Dundas, if grounds can be laid for so severe a measure which justice does not repudiate and which public opinion would sustain.

It must be remembered, that the presence of Sir E. Lyons and the feelings as described of the officers of the fleet exercise a salutary influence and control over the conduct of Admiral Dundas, and practically diminish the public danger which might arise from the errors of his judgment. But this view opens considerations of policy and of expediency apart from justice.

This question of recalling Commanders-in-chief engaged in great operations at a distance, and in a state of circumstances not known when the decision is to be taken, was much discussed in Peel's Cabinet in the case of Lord Gough. I cannot forget the argument of the Duke of Wellington which prevailed on that occasion. He said, 'You are dissatisfied with your General, perhaps with some reason; but while you are discussing his merits, he very probably is fighting and conquering your enemy; and what will be your position as a Government when your censures or recall shall arrive on the scene of action in the moment of victory?'

How right he was, and what a serious scrape he avoided by leaving Lord Gough in command! . . .

These are some of the considerations which induce me to think that it will be prudent to keep Admiral Dundas in his present position for a short time longer.

I wish to know your opinion, and I hope to be fortified

by it in the course which I am disposed to take. I have written to the Duke of Newcastle, telling him that I have consulted you ; that I admit his complaints, but that I demur to his remedies.

In reply Lord Aberdeen, as might be expected from his just and generous nature, gave his unhesitating assent to the view taken by Sir James Graham.

HADDO HOUSE, *October 8, 1854.*

Your letter took me entirely by surprise, for I was not at all prepared for anything of the kind. It is true that I had occasionally heard complaints of the inactivity of Dundas, but nothing specific was alleged against him, and I had heard from the same quarters pretty much the same opinions expressed respecting Raglan himself.

Common justice demands that we should not proceed in such an offhand manner, and that we should act on better authority than the opinions of Mr. Layard, or of Mr. Delane.

I have seen many private letters from Lyons, all speaking in high terms of Dundas, and warmly taking up his defence. . . .

Dundas also has behaved generously towards Lyons. Had he been little-minded and suspicious, there might have been room for jealousy ; but he has given Lyons his entire confidence, and in his private letters, which have been shown to me, he cannot find terms sufficiently strong to express his obligations.

I think your reasoning is sound and conclusive. I recollect very well the scrape from which the Duke preserved us by preventing the recall of Lord Gough. But the present case is one of strict justice.

In the absence, therefore, of any assignable ground for his recall, I agree with you in thinking that we ought to allow Dundas to remain for the short time which would be required for his naturally coming home. And I have the less hesitation in coming to this opinion from my persuasion that, in consequence of the singularly cordial footing on which they stand, Lyons will practically have the chief direction of all really important matters.

Before receiving this answer from Lord Aberdeen Sir James had written :

To Mr. Gladstone

Private.

BALMORAL, October 6, 1854.

There is much truth, I fear, in the accounts which have reached you from the Black Sea.

Sir Edmund Lyons was sent by me specially to prepare the way for this Sebastopol operation, for he had circumnavigated the Black Sea twenty years ago, and had visited the port of Sebastopol. Moreover, I selected him as the naval officer of the highest promise whom I considered best qualified to assist Admiral Dundas, found by me in command on that station, and to succeed him in any adverse event.

My hopes and intentions have not been disappointed. Sir Edmund has been the life and soul of the whole movement. Without him I doubt whether the expedition to the Crimea would have been undertaken ; without him I am sure the necessary means of success, so far as the Navy is concerned, would not have been provided. I hope that Sebastopol will still fall before winter. Admiral Dundas will then return to England, and the command will devolve on Lyons, unless, indeed, we bring him home to wield our thunder in the Baltic next spring.

The following letters prove how steadily Graham had kept his mind fixed on his one great object, and from whom he had received most aid.

To Sir Edmund Lyons

May 8.—I partake entirely of your feelings about Sebastopol, and I am glad that you are on the spot [at Varna], and in a high position, so that your opinion must be fairly considered. It is easy to underrate dangers at a distance which you do not expect to share. The case is far different when the estimate of danger is formed by one who has the best means of appreciating it, and in his own person must run the greatest risk. This is your

position with regard to Sebastopol, and you will not fail, I trust, to urge your arguments in favour of an early attack.

Extensive arrangements and much previous inquiry may be necessary, but this is the object to be kept steadily and constantly in view. If it can be attained the blow is decisive, and will secure peace on a stable foundation.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of a success such as this ; everything else is secondary to it. Nothing should be left to chance that can be reduced to certainty. The anchorages and landing-places should be closely examined ; the strength of the land defences, and of the army, in the Crimea should be ascertained at any cost.

September 4.—Your letters breathe the right spirit, and inspire me with hope. The long inactivity of the fleet and the ravages of cholera have led me sometimes almost to despair ; but while you are on the spot the great prize of Sebastopol need not be regarded as beyond our reach.

I have told Admiral Dundas that I consider nothing done in the Black Sea while that remains undone. The Duke of Newcastle has written to Raglan in the same sense, and Sir John Burgoyne and you are witnesses that from the beginning I have pointed to Sebastopol as the mark to which every effort should be directed.

Long ago you have declared that all is ready. I have provided all that the army can require both for embarkation and for landing. You have pointed out the spot where you are satisfied a landing can be effected. Your part has been well performed. I hope that others will now proceed to rival you.

It is not the wish of Admiral Dundas to remain much longer on foreign service ; his health is failing, and he wishes to be relieved as soon as it can be done consistently with his honour. My intention is that you should be his successor.

You have judged most wisely in establishing friendly relations with Lord Stratford. No Ambassador and naval Commander-in-chief in time of war and on a distant station can come to an open rupture without inflicting serious injury on their common country. It may not be easy to maintain this friendly intercourse, but let

no effort be omitted on your part to prevent the recurrence of any angry and unseemly quarrels.

September 13.—You have been the life and soul of this movement to the Crimea ; without you neither the means nor the inclination would have been forthcoming. Happen what may, I can never forget your services up to this time. We are on the tip-toe of expectation.

September 25.—My heart is gladdened by the happy intelligence that the army is safely landed in the Crimea, and that it is British skill and British firmness of purpose which have overcome every difficulty and carried the great object.

You know well how long and how anxiously I have desired that at all hazards Sebastopol should be attacked before winter. Without your steady support and extraordinary exertions this great exploit would never have been accomplished.

From Admiral Dundas

September 24.—The day after the battle of the Alma Prince Mentschikoff assembled the admirals and captains of the Russian ships, and arranged that five sail of the line and two frigates should be moored across the harbour mouth, and on the appearance of the allied fleets these ships were to be sunk. This was told me by a Pole who deserted from one of the ships.

Yesterday, when the fleet made Sebastopol, two signal guns were fired, and instantly the whole of the ships moored to each other across the harbour were seen to sink. . . . The mouth of the harbour is completely blocked up, so that the remaining Russian ships cannot come out, and nothing large can get in.

The deserter states that the greatest consternation exists.

I have sent an officer to Lord Raglan to inform him of this most astounding event.

We had intended to attack those ships, and then I thought that the Prince would have sunk them, but to do so when we appeared seems to be a very great proof of weakness. I trust it may be found that this is so, and the fall of Sebastopol will follow.

To Sir Edmund Lyons

October 13. Private and Confidential.—It delights me to tell you that your merits and exertions are well understood and duly appreciated both here and in Paris. Lord Raglan in his public despatches and in his private letters does you justice, but the full extent of the services which you have rendered is not yet clearly known. Your conscience tells you how well you deserve of your country, and depend upon it the time is not far distant when your real merits in the late proceedings will be clear as the day. In the meantime, go on as you have done ; your friends and your country can desire no more. Your conduct has even surpassed my expectations, and they were high.

In the short time that remains avoid, as indeed you have done most judiciously, a rupture with your Commander-in-chief. I write to you with the utmost confidence, and without the least reserve.

Lord Raglan's letter of October 13, pressing for the support of the fleets, is given by Mr. Kinglake.

Admiral Dundas replied :

You may depend on my using every exertion with my French colleagues to aid in your object. Sir E. Lyons I have recalled from his present post, where his services have been so valuable, and I have no doubt in his magnificent screw ship he will be of the greatest use here. I will consult with Admiral Hamelin as to our joint operations.

From Admiral Dundas

October 18.—I have often told you that on the sea front little or nothing could be done by ships ; and if it had not been at the *urgent* and pressing request of Lord Raglan and Canrobert, I never would have attempted what I did yesterday.

Army men know nothing of the matter, but of course are anxious to draw the fire off themselves. There never was fire better kept up than by our ships till after dark.

Though at great cost of material and men, at least the object Lord Raglan hoped for from our attacking the forts has been obtained by giving confidence to his own men and distracting the attention of the enemy. We have had our ships very much disabled, and a loss of 45 killed and 271 wounded. The French, I should think, as many more ; but they had full complements on board. We had two-thirds, which was so far fortunate, or our loss would have been double.

I observe the Board object to my landing the marines. I believe my doing so saved Balaklava from falling into the hands of the Russians.

Sir Edmund Lyons (as he always does) behaved admirably yesterday, and so did your brother.

For obvious reasons I have not named in my public letter the state of our ships. The *Invalide Russe* will perhaps claim this as a victory !

To Sir Edmund Lyons

October 25.—I send for your confidential information the copy of a letter I have written to Admiral Dundas on several important matters of service. If he show the original letter to you, no harm will be done, for you will receive that as a mark of *his* confidence. If he do not show it to you, bear the matters in mind which I press on his attention, and exert your influence to have my wishes carried into effect. I rely on you for the infusion of some fire into these movements.

November 30.—I wish Lord Raglan could be induced to send some of his immense fleet of steamer transports to Toulon for French troops. The Emperor assures us he is ready to embark 'his last man,' and is only anxious to obtain means of conveyance. We also shall have ready here five thousand more troops by Christmas.

Without unduly nursing your sailors and marines on shore, mind that they are not sent on forlorn hopes, or needlessly and too deeply committed. If you lose them, they cannot be replaced, and the efficiency of the fleet is destroyed.

January 12, 1855.—I do not wish to prescribe any operations from hence. They must be left to your

discretion on the spot. But I hope that under your direction the Russians in every quarter of the Black Sea will be kept in a state of constant movement and alarm, and will be made to feel that a new hand is at the helm in the British fleet.

The Russian Envoy at Vienna has accepted the four bases framed by Austria, France, and England, as terms on which the Czar is content to negotiate. The motive which has led to this acceptance gives rise to conjecture. The hope may be entertained by the Russians that difficulties may arise, and that a peace may be rejected by France and England which Austria and Germany might regard as a reasonable settlement, and thus the triple alliance may be broken up. Or, it is possible that Russia may be weary of the war, may have ascertained that this is not her opportunity, and may sincerely desire the cessation of hostilities.

Be this as it may, I am anxious to press on you the duty and necessity of pushing every advantage without the least reference to the pacific overtures and conferences. Proceed steadily in the prosecution of the war, regardless of negotiations which may be illusory, and even intended to deaden our exertions at a critical moment, and snatch from our grasp a prize which we have all but won. France and England will grant no armistice. They rely on the leaders of their fleets and armies looking to Sebastopol and to the enemy in front of them, not to Vienna and to the negotiations in their rear.

January 19.—The negotiations have made no progress. In truth, both sides wait for the issue of the struggle in the Crimea. Everything turns on the fortune of war before Sebastopol.

The complaints of mismanagement at Balaklava are grievous. We hear of stores lying on the beach uncovered and unmoved, without owners or means of distribution. There must be some neglect on the part both of the Commissariat and of the Quartermaster-General. The naval portion of the charge will have been put to rights by you; but surely in concert with Lord Raglan you may be able to suggest a remedy for the defective military arrangements. Tell me in confidence how this matter stands. We are held responsible; yet, as far

as I am concerned, I have withheld no power from the authorities on the spot, who alone can rectify omissions. I have endeavoured to provide ample means, and have never refused any assistance which has been asked.

On the Quartermaster-General (afterwards Lord Airey) much blame had been laid by *The Times* and the Duke of Newcastle, who pressed Lord Raglan to remove him. But Lord Raglan knew too well his value as his right-hand man, and after the war the Chelsea Board of Inquiry absolved him and several other officers from censures which had been unjustly heaped on them.

As regards the Commissariat in the Crimea, while the Chelsea Board traced the sufferings of the army to want of land transport, and want of land-transport to want of forage, they set down the want of forage to omission on the part of the Treasury to send a proper supply from England. On which Mr. Kinglake suggests that the Secretary for War himself might well have enforced on the Treasury prompt compliance with the demands from the seat of war.

Meanwhile at home public opinion had been driven half frantic by the mismanagement and inefficiency reported to prevail in the Army—but not in the Navy, except so far as in the Baltic it had declined to attack Cronstadt or Sweaborg. And the national mind was still further lashed into perfect fury when *The Times*, the journal responsible for the most exciting reports, instead of attempting to moderate the outburst of passion began to stimulate and lead it.

For this Mr. Kinglake gives a date as precise as for the mandate to attack Sebastopol. That mandate was on June 15, 1853. The first announcement of failure of the enterprise was on December 23, 1854.

The journal [Kinglake writes] which, a few days before, had superbly rebuked every access of alarm was now enjoining despair. And in ungoverned terms.

Of the examples given, a few will here suffice.

Our army is 'menaced by a disaster to which there can be found no parallel in the dreary annals of war'; 'total disorganisation'; the British army has perished as an army'; 'the bubble has now finally burst, the last chance is gone'; 'final catastrophe'; 'chaos come again'; 'the doom of nations'—these were some of the strains in which—Russia all the while thankfully listening—the great journal chanted our dirge.¹

What effect all this had to accomplish similar chaos Parliament will be seen in the next chapter.

¹ *Invasion of the Crimea*, vii., 233-5. 'The citations are from several numbers of *The Times*.

CHAPTER XII

1855-56

Roebuck's Committee on the War—Ministers resign—Attempts to form a Government—Derby, Lansdowne, Russell, fail—Palmerston succeeds—Urged by Aberdeen, Peelites join—Palmerston yields to Inquiry—Peelites resign—Graham gives his Reasons—Farewells to Colleagues—Vienna Conference—Russell resigns—Close of the War.

WHEN Parliament met, a private member, Roebuck, gave notice to move for an inquiry into the conduct of the war. Thereupon Lord John Russell sent in to the Queen his resignation. Next day the whole Cabinet tendered theirs,¹ but at the Queen's request first met their assailants in debate. Unfortunately, Sir James Graham was absent ill. Mr. Gladstone stated with great force his objections to such an inquiry.

In reply Mr. Disraeli took full advantage of Lord John Russell's hasty action.

When the debate [he said] is commenced by the secession of the most eminent member of the Government, and when we are told by him that the conduct of the war is entrusted to a minister who he thinks is unequal to the task, I ask the country—I ask Ministers themselves—whether they can complain that a member of the Opposition should give his vote according to the belief which he entertains.

Many besides 'members of the opposition' so voted,

¹ Morley's *Gladstone*, i. 522.

especially Whig adherents of Lord John Russell. Against the inquiry proposed there were 148, for it 305; and Ministers at once resigned.

Thus left without advisers, the Queen sent first for Lord Derby, who invited to join him Palmerston, Gladstone, and Sidney Herbert. But that did not succeed.

Gladstone told Palmerston :

I could not act without Lord Aberdeen's approval, nor should I willingly separate myself from Graham. If we join, we must join in force.

All three refusing the offer, Lord Derby gave up the attempt to form a Government.

Of this Mr. Gladstone wrote in later years :

I think that Lord Derby's error in not forming an administration was palpable and even gross. Such, it has appeared, was the opinion of Disraeli. . . . When Lord Palmerston (probably with a sagacious discernment of the immediate future) declined, he [Lord Derby] made no separate offer to the Peelites.¹

Had such an offer been made, evidently Gladstone would have liked to accept it.

On Lord Derby's failing, the Queen consulted Lord Lansdowne, who also invited Mr. Gladstone to remain in office. Again Mr. Gladstone declined, but afterwards, too late, repented. He writes :

I have always looked back upon that refusal with pain, as a serious and even gross error of judgment. It was, I think, injurious to the public, if it contributed to the substitution as Prime Minister of Lord Palmerston for Lord Lansdowne.'

Derby having failed, and Lansdowne having failed,

¹ Morley's *Gladstone*, i. 527.

² *Ibid.*, p. 530.

the Queen sent next for Lord John Russell, who also failed. Palmerston was willing to serve under him—with the lead in the Commons. But the other colleagues whom Lord John had left declined. Some would not even see him. Graham told him plainly what he thought of his behaviour to Lord Aberdeen.

Last, the turn came to Palmerston, and the question for the Peelites was, Would they serve under him ?

To Graham Palmerston wrote :

PICCADILLY, *February 5, 1855.*

The Queen having commissioned me to endeavour to form a Government, I wish much to have some conversation with you on the subject, and I will call on you for that purpose in the course of the afternoon.

Graham replied :

ADMIRALTY, *February 5, 1855.*

I am still confined to bed, and unable to write. Though I would willingly have conversed with you on the whole subject to which your mission from the Queen refers, I am afraid there are difficulties in the way of my rendering you the assistance which you desire.

The fact is all that morning Gladstone and Herbert were consulting with Graham, who lay in bed at the Admiralty, seriously ill. They knew what the country would say if neither with Derby, nor with Lansdowne, nor yet with Palmerston, would they lend their aid. But their difficulty was this. They had no confidence in the Cabinet without Aberdeen ; Parliament—rightly or wrongly—had no confidence in the Cabinet with Aberdeen as head ; and except as head Aberdeen would not serve. To solve their doubts they pressed for his advice, and he too came to Graham's sick-room.

There he told them that he would not stay in the Cabinet, but strongly counselled them to stay. Yet when Gladstone asked him whether he would express confidence in the Cabinet under Palmerston with regard to the question of war and peace, Lord Aberdeen would not do so. Hope he would express, but not confidence.

Hope was not enough. Aberdeen retired, hurt by the rejection of his advice so urgently requested, and letters were written to Palmerston, declining (but not very firmly) to join his Government.

So ended that day, and the strain on Graham may be imagined when next morning, under pressure from Palmerston, the three friends arrived again at his bedside, to reopen the question.

We met [writes Mr. Gladstone], at twelve at the Admiralty, where Graham lay much knocked up with the fatigue and anxiety of yesterday. I read to him and Lord Aberdeen Palmerston's letter of to-day to me. Herbert came in, and made arguments in his sense.

Herbert had already repented of his yesterday's decision. Gladstone, with characteristic pertinacity, put again to Aberdeen his question, 'Would you, in your place as a peer, declare, if we joined the Cabinet, that it has your confidence with reference to war and peace?'

Hard pressed, and with fresh assurances from Palmerston, this time Lord Aberdeen said 'Yes.' Gladstone was satisfied; Graham, though his own leaning was against it, was willing to rely on the guarantee from Lord Aberdeen; Herbert rejoiced to carry his two friends with him. And so the three resumed office, under a new chief.

It appears that by their request Lord Aberdeen

had negotiated for them with Palmerston. Graham writes :

To Baron Stockmar

Private and Confidential.

ADMIRALTY, *February 6, 1855.*

After much discussion Gladstone and I have authorised Aberdeen to see Palmerston on our behalf, and if he can obtain assurances which are satisfactory to him with respect to the conduct of foreign affairs, and of the negotiations about to commence at Vienna, we have consented to remain at our posts.

Having lost in the Duke of Newcastle a colleague whom we trusted, and in Lord Aberdeen a chief whom we loved—and considering the particular change about to be made in the head of the Government—we can offer no greater proof of our devotion to the service of the Queen, and of our desire in a great emergency to promote the public good. I pray that this sacrifice of personal feelings may not be made in vain.

He was rewarded by Royal approval, the Queen herself writing to express

Her great satisfaction at Sir James Graham remaining at the Admiralty, which is of the greatest importance to herself and to the country.

In returning thanks Sir James wrote :

The desire to do his duty faithfully in painful and difficult circumstances has been the sole motive which guided the conduct of Sir James Graham ; and his greatest encouragement and one of his highest rewards will be the continued sanction of Your Majesty's confidence and approval. No effort on his part shall be wanting to deserve it.

On resuming office, Graham's first act had been to write in friendly terms to Lord John Russell.

ADMIRALTY, *February 12, 1855.*

This is the first letter which I have been able to write with my own hand since my illness, and I gladly offer it as a tribute of friendly congratulation on your acceptance of the Special Embassy to Vienna at this most critical juncture.

I regard it as the most happy augury of an honourable peace ; and let me add that on private grounds I rejoice in this arrangement. Your temporary absence from the House of Commons, as matters at present stand, is not to be regretted either by you or by your friends ; and I am convinced that you will return from Vienna with additional claims on the respect and gratitude of your country.

From my heart I wish you success, and a speedy and triumphant return.

But the bright prospect was soon clouded over. Hardly had the three Peelites returned to office when again they found it necessary to resign.

At the moment of decision, crippled by severe illness, and anxious above all things, before consenting to serve under Palmerston, to obtain pledges from him as to foreign policy and the Vienna negotiations, Graham had overlooked the importance of a binding agreement as to the proposed Committee of Inquiry. He had assumed that the resignations of the Prime Minister and of the War Minister, against whom popular indignation had been most roused, and the substitution of a leader so much in vogue as Palmerston, would appease the country, or if not, that Palmerston would have firmness to resist a demand of which he disapproved. But either public opinion was stronger than Graham had perceived, or Palmerston was weaker. In the words of his biographer :

As to Mr. Roebuck's Committee, Lord Palmerston still retained his objection to it as not in accordance with

the Constitution, or efficient for its purpose. He told the House that, as an English king once rode up to an insurrection and offered to be its leader, so the Government offered to the House of Commons to be its Committee, and would do of itself all that it was possible to do.

As, however, Mr. Roebuck still persisted—Lord Palmerston yielded.¹

Graham, Gladstone, and Sidney Herbert were of other stuff. They urged Palmerston to ‘be stout.’ When he would not, they resigned, and the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland followed their example.

From Lord St. Germans

VICEREGAL LODGE, *February 22, 1855.*

I know no more than I can learn from the papers of what has taken place. Pray lighten my darkness, and enable me to shape my own course. As at present advised I mean to stick to you, but I shall do nothing until I have heard from you.

February 25.—Your speech left no room for doubt or hesitation. I enclose a copy of my letter to Lord Palmerston.

[Enclosure]

The reasons given by Sir James Graham, by Gladstone, and by Sidney Herbert for receding from your Government, appear to me to be conclusive. I therefore think it my duty to adhere to the friends and colleagues of Sir Robert Peel, and to request you to convey to the Queen my resignation of the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland.

To Lord St. Germans

Yours has been a generous and high-minded decision. I hope it is the right one. I cannot combat it; it is in exact conformity with my own.

Cardwell too, though pressed by Palmerston to be his Chancellor of the Exchequer, refused.

¹ Ashley's *Life of Lord Palmerston*, ii. 209.

‘Although Palmerston objected to Roebuck’s Committee, he was practically compelled,’ says the Marquis of Lorne, ‘to accept it.’ Graham could not be so compelled. He preferred resignation. But let him speak for himself. In Parliament the grounds he gave were these :

I object to the appointment of a Select Committee. It is open to the majority of the Committee to decide whether it shall be secret or open to the public. Let me regard that question in its double aspect.

If it should be a secret committee, the persons inculturated by the evidence will not have the opportunity to defend themselves, to cross-examine the witnesses, to rebut false accusations. Until the end of the inquiry the whole will remain secret and unknown.

If it be an open committee, from day to day the evidence will be published, the most adverse comments of a party character will be made, and the most erroneous impressions will be formed, bearing hard on absent individuals having no power of examination or defence.

The delegation of such powers to a Committee of eleven members of this House appears to me to be a most dangerous course. I should not hesitate to prefer inquiry at the Bar. A Select Committee is unprecedented ; for an inquiry at the Bar there are precedents, though not—as now proposed—while military operations were pending.

The Walcheren inquiry took place at the Bar. But the war had terminated, and the generals and admirals whose characters had been attacked were present to defend themselves.

Far be it from me to contest the power of this House in its largest sense. . . . My whole public life has been spent within these walls, and the greatest efforts of my youth, and of my more mature years—it is not as a matter of regret I mention it—have been devoted to increasing the democratic power of this assembly.

Within its proper sphere, no man rejoices more than I do in its might, its control over the officers of State and the Ministers of the Crown, its powers co-ordinate

with the Crown and the House of Peers, and greater than those of the House of Peers with reference to taxation, supply, and ways and means.

As the grand inquest of the nation, I admit in the broadest sense its constitutional power. I know no limit to that power ; except when, by its exercise at an ill-advised moment, it shall trench on the legitimate and constitutional functions of the Executive Government.

After referring to the original motion for inquiry as intended to be a vote of censure on the then existing Government, and noting their consequent resignation and the formation of a new Government, Sir James went on to say :

After that, I was much surprised to find that it was considered necessary to proceed with this inquiry.

I may be charged with want of foresight. I readily submit to that imputation. But I must claim the right to hold my own opinion.

I believe the inquiry to be unnecessary. I am certain that the Executive Government, possessing the confidence of this House, can more efficiently, more rapidly, and more surely do what is wanted than can be expected from a prolonged inquiry.

While these gentlemen without any official knowledge are picking their way as best they may without the assistance of any servant of the Crown, the Government will be deciding on action ; while the Committee are seeking the way to reform the Executive, the Executive, wielding the power of the Crown and the confidence of this House, will do rapidly, surely, and safely what is to be done.

Thus I consider this Committee unnecessary, but I have stronger objections. I consider it unjust, and I will give my reasons.

The Executive Government appoints all the admirals, all the generals, all officers in the Army and Navy. The servants of the Crown have the power of selection, of

control, of promotion, and of removal; and I must say that I think the officers so chosen, so controlled, so subject to the authority of the servants of the Crown, have a correlative claim on them to be defended from any other inquiry behind their backs.

Let us carry the argument a little further. I refer to the position of Lord Raglan.

I imagine that, of all the difficulties in which the most splendid human talents can be tried, the successful command of an army in presence of a superior force of the enemy is the most severe. The chance of success in that command rests mainly in the possession of undivided authority.

But, if your commander is in command beside another army, there must be constantly situations involving complicated considerations; there must be compromises in decision, there must be questions about the distribution of relative forces. . . .

I will not go further. I have shadowed forth the danger of inquiry respecting the army in front of Sebastopol. There is not a single gentleman present in this the most intelligent assembly in the world, who does not feel the nature of the dangers to which I have alluded.

Then came the great contrast between Graham and Palmerston.

But it is said that, whatever danger there may be in this inquiry, it is irresistible.

I demur to that doctrine, as being in itself a most dangerous one. Inquiry is irresistible only because those whose duty it is to confront it have not the firmness to resist. Yielding to the danger which, if resisted, would certainly be overcome, they are hurried, against their conscientious convictions, into consequences of the most perilous nature.

I know that I expose myself to the most painful of taunts. It may be said to me, 'You are about to leave your colleagues in a season of immense difficulty. It is in such moments that the bonds of political union ought to be most carefully maintained.'

But, without offence to my friends on the Treasury

bench, I deny that I am the deserter. I took my position in common with them, resolving to resist this inquiry. It was resisted. The position was taken up firmly. I still stand to my guns in that position. They abandon it, spike the guns, and run away.

I cannot think it is right in a Minister of the Crown, if he believe that any course is dangerous, to decline resistance because resistance may be unpopular, and so refuse the House the opportunity of reconsidering its decision.

I know no greater duty for a public man than that of acting up to what he conscientiously believes to be right ; and it is in the painful discharge of that duty that I have this evening appeared before you.

I know nothing more honourable than the service of the Crown when united with colleagues in whose principles and measures you concur, and when you enjoy the confidence of the people, and of the Sovereign.

But I know nothing more dishonourable, or more painful, than assenting to measures, adopted by the majority of your colleagues, which you consider dangerous, which your conscience and your judgment tell you are improper, and, I must add, when you have the painful conviction that the confidence of this House is not reposed in the Cabinet of which you are a member.

It may be said, what right have I to make that last assertion ? Sir, I have been long a member of this House, and there are indications not to be mistaken.

I should conceal the truth if I did not state that, having sat on that bench only three or four evenings, after great changes had been made in order to conciliate this House, I came to the painful conclusion that the Administration of which until to-day I was a member did not possess in a greater degree the confidence of the House than that from which we had all retired together.

I said that I would speak without reserve, and with your kind indulgence I have executed my purpose, imperfectly, but honestly.

Honied words at parting with colleagues are almost nauseous, generally deceitful, and—like lovers' vows under similar circumstances—unavailing, and laughed to scorn.

With the colleagues I have left I have worked for two years. They were my friends, and I esteem them. I value them, but I could not be led by them to take a step which my conscience and my judgment disapprove. My feeling towards them is strong and friendly, and if it were less so, I should still feel it my duty in every way to give them my humble support.

I shall make no further professions, but shall endeavour to prove by my conduct that with me the safety of the State, in a moment of great emergency, is paramount to every other consideration.

Greville remarks that Graham's was 'a very good speech; Gladstone was too diffuse, and Sidney Herbert feeble, but coming after Graham they had nothing more to say.'

Their conduct in resigning was much decried. Some comments on it were incredibly foolish,¹ others better founded. But Graham's arguments remained unanswered. The weak point of his position he frankly acknowledged. Before joining a Government, he ought to have made sure, as Gladstone thought he himself had,² that its leader would stand firm.

Lord Clarendon wrote of the Peelites as 'the three best men in the Cabinet,' and deplored their action. But his letters to Graham are in a most friendly tone.

February 21. Private.—I have not words to express how deeply I regret the decision you came to this morning. To myself personally the loss of a colleague for whom I feel the most affectionate regard, and with whom I have had two years' unruffled official relations, is irreparable. But on public grounds I still more regret your resignation.

¹ For instance, Mr. Morley has rescued from oblivion 'idle gossip long prevailing, that Graham could not forgive Palmerston for not having helped to defend him in the matter of opening Mazzini's letters'! *Life of Gladstone*, i. 546.

² *Ibid.*, p. 538.

Our army is gone ! The power and prestige of England now depend on her navy, and yet, just at the moment when operations are about to commence, the navy is deprived of its head, and of that consummate talent for administration which has effected wonders in that branch of our service.

The utter impossibility of finding a fit successor to you makes me tremble for the consequences of your retirement.

Graham replies :

ADMIRALTY, *February 22, 1855.*

I am touched by the kindness of your expressions of regret at our impending separation.

I never took any decision from a sense of public duty with more pain, and I ought to have taken precautions with respect to the appointment of this Committee before I joined Palmerston's Government. But I was too ill at the time to exercise all the forethought which was necessary, and I was confidently persuaded that the Committee had served its turn, when Aberdeen and Newcastle were dismissed, and when Palmerston was placed at the head of affairs. I fully expected that the Committee would have been got rid of, and that its flank would have been turned.

I still think that, with a little more deliberation and skill, this latter operation might have been successfully performed ; but this chance was thrown away, and a surrender at discretion, without an alternative or modification, was alone proposed in the last instance. To this course it was impossible for me to consent. My judgment may have erred, but my opinion is deeply rooted, and I am bound to give effect to it.

You say truly that we have worked together for two years, and in trying times, without an angry word or a shade of difference ; and the impression left on my mind towards you is indelible. I respect your abilities, and my friendship is warm and sincere.

From Lord Cowley also came a kind farewell ;

PARIS, *February 23.*

I am afraid from what I hear that the country is about to lose your valuable services. I regret it most deeply, for I believe that our navy was never before in so efficient a state, or its patronage more fairly administered.

With the successor found for him Graham's relations were perfect.

From Sir Charles Wood

February 25. Private.—It has been settled to-day that I am to succeed you at the Admiralty. Most sincerely do I wish that there was no opening for succession, but I will not pour forth my unavailing regrets.

I have the comfort of knowing that I shall find everything in first-rate order. I hope you will allow me before I embark in the huge mass of business which must be going on, to hear from you how a great number of matters stand.

To Sir Charles Wood

ADMIRALTY, *February 25.*

I shall be happy and ready to give you every information you may require. I hope that you will find the office in good working order, and you will have the advantage, which I have enjoyed, of the assistance of most able and trustworthy colleagues.

I have continued to carry on the duties, and exercise the patronage, according to established usage, as if nothing had occurred.

From Sir Charles Wood

February 28.—I have said to Lyons that you have been kind enough to read to me your most recent letters to him, that I adopt them to the fullest extent of every word, and beg him to keep me fully informed how things go on.

I cannot omit this opportunity of thanking you most sincerely for the frank and cordial manner in which

you communicated everything to me this morning, and saying how satisfactory it is to me to find not only that everything is in such complete order—for that I was well assured of—but that in all our views of future operations and future arrangements there was such a complete identity of opinions.

I shall do my best to carry on your plans and views ; but the more I see the more I regret that you do not remain to carry them on yourself.

March 4.—I cannot tell you the repugnance I have to begin my new duty. I feel as if I was committing a sin against the public weal in taking any step to change the hands in which the Naval Administration is placed. I shall fall sick, and leave you there perforce !

From Right Hon. T. B. Macaulay

ALBANY, *March 2, 1855.*

I can hardly condole with you on your retirement ; but I heartily condole with the public, and, much as I love Charles Wood, I can wish him nothing better than that he may equal you as an administrator.

With another friend, who, on Cardwell's refusing, became Chancellor of the Exchequer, pleasant letters were exchanged.

To Sir George Lewis

ADMIRALTY, *February 26, 1855.*

I did not know, when we discussed passing events so freely, how near your personal relation to them was likely to become. I think that your decision to accept is right.

From Sir George Lewis

When I had the pleasure of seeing you I was totally ignorant of the intention to offer me the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, and moreover I expected it as little as that I should receive the offer of being Archbishop of Canterbury.

I decided in favour of accepting from a sense of duty,

in the midst of feelings which I will describe to you when we meet.

I am much comforted by your opinion that I decided rightly ; not only from my conviction of your friendship, but also because I regard you as peculiarly qualified to estimate correctly all the circumstances on which a proper judgment of the case depended.

To Sir Edmund Lyons Sir James wrote :

ADMIRALTY, *February 26, 1855.*

I have been going from hence for some time past, but I am now irrecoverably gone. I have acted from a strong sense of duty, and I have left a noble post at a trying moment with great reluctance. But I would not hand over to an irresponsible Committee of the House of Commons the characters of the commanders by sea and land, on a distant station, of whom the Queen's Ministers are the guardians and protectors as well as rulers. I never despair, and I will continue to hope the best. You, I am quite sure, will do your duty with unabated energy and decision. I shall watch the progress of your measures with the deepest interest : and my hopes and my prayers will be joined with ardent wishes for your success.

Let me entreat you to have an eye on my son, who is a midshipman on board the *St. Jean d'Acre*. He is the object of my tenderest affection and fondest hopes. I venture sometimes to believe that he has noble qualities which, if his life be spared, will not be unworthy of the profession of his choice.

On Sir James Graham's leaving the Admiralty warm acknowledgments of his personal kindness and of his public services came from many quarters.

From Major O'Brien (Private Secretary)

WAR OFFICE, *March 10, 1855.*

Had I not seen you every morning and been loth to take leave, I should have sooner expressed what I very deeply feel at parting from you.

The entire confidence you reposed in me, and your

unvarying kindness, and indulgence for my mistakes and blunders, I have always been most grateful for, and I can safely say that affection more than a sense of duty has influenced me in serving you.

I feel much the great benefits I have derived from being with you. In every way it has been beneficial to me, and the period I have passed with you has been the most interesting of my life.

From Rear-Admiral Sir Thomas Cochrane

ADMIRALTY HOUSE, PORTSMOUTH, *March 2, 1855.*

There has never been a First Lord of the Admiralty who knew better, and few so well, what to require from those under his authority.

I consider it extremely unfortunate that you should have felt called upon to withdraw from your most important position at the present critical moment, when a master mind is most essential to secure the efficiency as well as the utmost energy of our fleets ; and it must be gratifying to you to find that in all the complaints that have been made against the different departments of the State as connected with the present war, whether merited or unmerited, the administration of the Admiralty has been unassailed.

From Admiral Sir William Parker

DEVONPORT, *March 5, 1855.*

I feel very sensibly the kindness of your farewell letter, which does but renew my regret at your leaving the Admiralty, where the advantages of your administrative powers will be recorded not only in many salutary regulations for the navy, but in fitting out two strong fleets without resorting to compulsory service.

From Captain (Sir) Henry Keppel

OFF SEBASTOPOL, *March 12, 1855.*

Last night I had the satisfaction of hearing your speech read out by Admiral Houston Stewart to Sir Edmund Lyons. I need not say how highly every word was approved. If honourable members after hearing that

speech vote according to the dictation of their own consciences, I shall not be without hope that they will reverse their decision for a Committee of Inquiry.

From Rear-Admiral (Sir Houston) Stewart

OFF SEBASTOPOL, *March 20, 1855.*

I cannot resist venturing a few lines expressive of the very sincere regret with which I have heard of your retirement from the Admiralty, and I can with truth add that this regret is very generally felt in the Fleet. I have not heard a dissentient voice. All seem agreed that at the present crisis there is no helmsman so well qualified by talent and experience to bring us well through the gale as yourself.

At the same time I am bound to admit that your reasons were quite conclusive, and I read with a mixture of pleasure and regret the admirable expression of your motives for resigning. Your own speech and that of Mr. Gladstone were unanswerable.

From Sir Edmund Lyons

March 17, 1855.

The perfect manner in which you have enabled me to commence my relations with your successor is one more proof of your consideration for the public service, as well as of your invariable kindness towards me.

You have left me in command of a numerous and well-appointed fleet entrusted to my care by you, and I hope to have it in my power to harass the enemy with it this year.

Captain Hastings and his squadron rendered good service at Eupatoria in the repulse of the attack on the 17th of February, a circumstance that has discouraged the Russians in the Crimea exceedingly, and seems to have given the *coup de grâce* to the Emperor Nicholas, who had ordered Mentschikoff to 'drive the infidel troops from off his territory into the sea.'

But as you have often said, Kertch and the Sea of Azof are the points for immediate and effective operations, and Bruat and I hope and trust that Lord Raglan and General Canrobert will be able to realise the hopes

they hold out to us of military co-operation in the beginning of April.

Our sailors afloat and ashore are in rude health. The brigade have not two per cent. on the sick list.

H.M.S. ROYAL ALBERT, OFF SEBASTOPOL, *March 27, 1855.*

The ships under my orders have landed at Eupatoria 51,400 men, 8,600 horses, and 97 guns, all hands working admirably, or such a result at such a season would have been out of the question.

My mind dwells upon the Sea of Azof, but I doubt whether Canrobert will spare a man, so long as there is standing room on the heights he occupies, and the matter is so very important that Bruat and I must try to accomplish it without military co-operation. Lord Raglan really cannot spare a man from his small number. But he sees as I do that success in that quarter might aid the negotiations at Vienna.

Many letters show how keen an interest Sir James continued to take in vigorous prosecution of the war. Especially he urged upon his successor completion of arrangements which he had made for cutting off in early spring the supplies from Central Russia to Sebastopol.

To Sir Charles Wood

NETHERBY, *April 14, 1855.*

I am grieved to hear that all my instructions regarding the preparation of gunboats for the sea of Azof have been disregarded. With a view to ultimate success in the Crimea this is vital, and its omission will render failure inevitable. You will bear witness that the fault is not mine. But no measures can be too strong on your part to remedy this fatal omission, and to place the responsibility for it on the right shoulders.

Division and subdivision of supreme military and naval authority—a vice necessarily inherent in the Alliance—has blighted its success.

That mischief continued and grew worse.

From Sir Edmund Lyons

Private.

May 12.—My last letter will have told you how grievously I had been disappointed by Canrobert's 'inimaginable' conduct, as Bruat calls it. And I confess I am a little disappointed with Bruat himself.

I observed to him that Canrobert had not sent him the message from the Emperor upon which his order for recall was founded, and I told him that if I were in his place I would 'sans hésitation aucune' go on, under the conviction that the Emperor if he were on the spot would command him to do so.

He, however, said that his resolution was 'inébranlable, and—as it was of importance to preserve unity of action and good feeling between the two fleets and armies—he took it for granted I would not separate from him.

The truth is, he thought the order from the Emperor was positive and peremptory. So nothing from me or Stewart could shake his resolution; and you may imagine his feelings when on his return here he found that there was nothing in the message from Paris to authorise the recall of the expedition, and the Emperor had given up his intention of coming here.

I still hope that in a few days we shall receive orders from London and Paris to renew the expedition, for I can imagine nothing so calculated to draw off the enemy's forces from the main body of his army, nothing so indispensable for the attainment of complete success in the Crimea, as our being masters of the Sea of Azof. With that, I look upon success, humanly speaking, as certain; without it, as very doubtful.

I hope that this 'inimaginable' conduct of Canrobert may be the signal for the command of the fleet being taken from him. Otherwise the fleets will either rest upon their shadows here in inactivity, or I shall be obliged to do something on my own account at Odessa or elsewhere.

But the possession of the Sea of Azof is, as you have seen from the first, the most important consideration of all.

To Sir Edmund Lyons

May 22.—The Kertch disappointment has disheartened me extremely. You know how long ago I insisted on the necessity of the early occupation of this point. I am convinced that without it you cannot command the Sea of Azof, and while that communication with the heart of Russia remains open you will be outnumbered in the Crimea by the enemy, who is enabled through that channel to draw boundless supplies of stores, ammunition, and reinforcements.

Peace was very nearly concluded at Vienna. I think that it might have been concluded without dishonour.

You, however, must carry on the war as if there were no such hope or possibility ; we at home must endeavour to bring the public mind to reason.

If you cannot obtain a victory, you must carefully avoid a great disaster. A serious reverse would render concessions on our part impossible. We should have to fight—to regain our position among nations—to the last extremity.

To Sir Charles Wood

June 3. Private.—I never ceased to urge this Kertch operation on Lord Raglan, Admiral Dundas, and Sir Edmund Lyons, from the first moment when the invasion of the Crimea was contemplated to the last day when I quitted the Board of Admiralty. My correspondence will speak for itself ; you have seen it.

I sent out eight ships of war of light draft for this very expedition, and I gave orders for the preparation at Constantinople of a large flotilla. But the expedition could not be undertaken without the detachment of a military force from before Sebastopol. Lord Raglan had not a man to spare, and Canrobert would give no assistance for this purpose.

From Sir Charles Wood

June 4.—Whether you are right in your views of peace or not, I will not discuss. But certain it is that you could not have left the Navy in a better state for war,

if you had been animated by the concentrated essence of Layard and Roebuck.

While this correspondence was in progress, Canrobert had been superseded (May 19) by Péliissier, who at once agreed to the expedition being sent, and on May 24, the Queen's birthday, Kertch was captured. Immense corn depôts and numerous vessels were destroyed, and Sir Edmund was able to report :

In the space of a fortnight the Sea of Azof has been swept by the allied squadron under Captain Lyons's orders, and the enemy deprived not only of the supplies which already existed in the different depôts, but also of the means of transporting the incoming crops.

About this time Sir James thus describes his position :

To Mr. Gladstone

June 2, 1855.

I do not wish to be driven by the force even of circumstances into the ranks of the Opposition, which plays a reckless game without much skill and with still less honesty ; but I am most desirous by every fair means to improve the chances of restoring peace, and there is no personal sacrifice consistent with honour which I am not ready to make for the attainment of this great national blessing.

July 7.—I have made many mistakes in public life, but perhaps the greatest I ever made was consenting to join Palmerston after the overthrow of Lord Aberdeen's Administration.

Like you I yielded to over-persuasion, in opposition to my own feelings and judgment, and (as I told the House) the first night on the Treasury bench under the new arrangement convinced me that the confidence of Parliament was not restored, and that it was an attempt to rule without power, at a critical juncture, by means of tame and unworthy compliances.

I have deeply regretted this error, it is the flaw in

our case. I rejoice in the recovery of an independent position, even at the cost of the sacrifices made to regain it. Possessing this advantage, we must be careful to improve it and sedulously to promote the public good to the best of our power.

The grand object is to put an end to this war as soon as possible, and to restore to Europe and especially to our own country the blessing of peace.

The estrangement of Austria, the disasters in the Crimea, the concessions of Russia, carried even to the point of willingness to consider in concert with Turkey the limitation of her naval force in the Black Sea—more than all, the certainty that France was willing to close with the terms offered at Vienna, if Pam and Co. had not refused their consent, are facts of great importance which require full explanation.

You see how much I agree with you in opinion both as to the state of affairs and as to the course which duty prescribes. But we must not only act rightly, we must act prudently, to secure the grand object.

My health, thank God, is much improved by a month's enjoyment of country air and of perfect quiet. I am prepared to go to London, and will meet you and Herbert at Argyll House any day after the 13th July.

By this time the Vienna conference seemed to promise peace. On three of the bases proposed the Powers came to terms. On the fourth, limiting Russia's naval strength in the Black Sea, the Austrian Minister proposed a compromise, which Russia accepted. The French Foreign Minister, present in person, undertook to press it on the French Emperor. Lord John promised to recommend it to his Government. Louis Napoleon approved the terms. Palmerston disapproved, and through Lord Cowley, with the aid of a French soldier,¹ induced the Emperor to retract his consent.

¹ For details see Kinglake, and Walpole's *Life of Lord John Russell*.

Thereupon Drouyn de Lhuys resigned. Lord John, who had failed to convince his colleagues, remained in the Cabinet, and spoke in favour of war. Aggrieved by this, Count Buol revealed what had been Lord John's action at Vienna, and notice was given of a vote of censure.

The course which Lord John had taken was at the time almost universally condemned. Mr. Gladstone wrote :

July 8.—The wheel of fortune has received a new and smart impulse from these astounding revelations of Lord John Russell, or in other words from his full confession of what, though we had been told of it, it was hardly possible to believe.

And Graham wrote :

To Lord Aberdeen

Private.

NETHERBY, *July 12, 1855.*

The terms of Sir E. Bulwer's motion impeach by implication Lord John's conduct of 'the negotiations at Vienna.' I do not see much ground of objection to his conduct there ; his error was his abrupt departure from Vienna ; and his crime—I cannot use a milder term—was his failure to press on the Cabinet the pacific views which he entertained ; and the deception which he practised on Parliament and on the public when in late debates he combated the opinions expressed by others which in his own heart and conscience he approved. He fanned the flame of war, which at Vienna he had promised to do his utmost to extinguish ; and his tameness in submitting to remain a member of the Cabinet, which on the question of peace or war set at naught his counsels and deliberate judgment, is an abject prostration both of spirit and of intellect of which there is no example, and for which no one could be prepared.

I am quite open to consider the course which we ought to take. It is contrary to my wish to give a vote of a vindictive character personally injurious to Lord John. I agree entirely with you in opinion that our duty is to

take the course which is most likely to ensure restoration of peace with the least delay.

All other considerations vanish into insignificance compared with this one object, and Lord John's recent conduct and fatal example are warnings of the danger of being swayed at such a moment by personal feelings or by party influences.

On July 16 Lord John resigned, and Bulwer's motion was withdrawn. Next day Mr. Roebuck tried to pledge the House to visit with severe indignation every member of the Cabinet whose counsels had led to the Crimean disasters, but this was rejected by 289 votes for 'the previous question' against only 172.

In August Sweaborg was bombarded heavily by the united fleets, with trifling loss on their part, but not captured. In September the Russians evacuated the south side of Sebastopol, and sank all their ships.

But peace was not made till the new year. It was signed on March 30, 1856. By that time the war had cost this country some twenty-eight thousand lives, and Russia, it was estimated, twenty times that number.¹

¹ Walpole's *History of England*, vi. 64.

CHAPTER XIII

1856-57

Illegal Enlistment of American Citizens—Graham's View—Palmerston and 'Peelites'—Graham—Gladstone—Cardwell—Newcastle—Stuart Wortley—Sidney Herbert—The Policy of Peel—Derby's Overture to Gladstone—Graham's Advice—Bombardment of Canton—Censured by Parliament—Supported by the Nation—Graham triumphs at the Poll—Cobden and Bright.

THE Parliamentary session of 1856 was uneventful, except as regards the conclusion of the Russian war.

Towards its close Great Britain was brought into unpleasant relations with the United States, a neutral Power, by illegal proceedings of the British Ambassador in enlisting American citizens. In December 1855 their Government made a request for Mr. Crampton's recall, and, when they obtained no satisfaction, in June 1856 they ordered him to leave Washington, and the question arose whether their Ambassador also should be ordered to leave London.

On this question Sir James Graham, after careful study of the facts, arrived reluctantly at a conclusion unfavourable to the British authorities concerned.

To Mr. Herbert

May 21.—Sir Gaspard Le Marchant [Governor of Nova Scotia] and all his subordinates acted with the greatest indiscretion, and deeply committed themselves. Crampton and Mr. Lumley were more prudent, but knowingly they violated the municipal law of America,

and sought to deceive the Government to which they were accredited, respecting their acts and intentions, by stratagems hardly consistent with good faith and honour.

We join issue on facts, and in my opinion we are worsted. If so, our apology is insufficient, and our omission to remove Crampton some time ago is a grave error.

At any rate a quarrel with America on such grounds is unjustifiable, and I regard the risk of war in such a case with horror and aversion. . . .

I am resolved not to be hustled into complicity with this American quarrel. If it can be accommodated, so much the better.

My desire is not to overthrow Palmerston, but to keep him in the right course, and to prevent his dangerous tendencies. But if he be determined to swagger, and to attempt a course of bullying with the United States, I am not disposed to take a hand in this fatal game. I am rather prepared to resist him in that case to the utmost, and in my opinion his early overthrow would be a much less evil than the imminent danger of an American War.

When the matter came before the House of Commons in July, 'the British case,' Gladstone writes, 'turned out in debate quite as bad as we thought it,' and Palmerston, having consulted his Whips, in a good-humoured speech gave way. Gladstone had made up his mind to speak and act in full concert with Graham.¹

After this latest experience of the new Prime Minister, Graham's thoughts were much employed on his relations and those of other 'Peelites' with the Government. His letters throw light on his own difficulties in supporting Palmerston, and on the diverse tendencies and prospects of that small band of able statesmen, of whom in the House of Commons he, if any one, might still be regarded as the leader. He writes to their chief, Lord Aberdeen :

¹ See Stanmore's *Memoir of Sidney Herbert*, ii. 48.

NETHERBY, *November 11, 1856.*

Gladstone is over-active, but he is sanguine. In the full vigour of youth, he is without sufficient occupation of that high order for which he pants, and for which his abilities pre-eminently qualify him.

I quite understand Cardwell's position, and give him full credit for the purest motives and most honourable intentions. But his present position is not tenable. If he intend to represent Oxford in a new Parliament, he must take a more decided course in favour not only of Liberalism, but of the Government; and although his tendencies are in that direction, his constituents outrun him. Not one word of complaint could be uttered against him in justice if he joined the Government to-morrow. He has made great sacrifices already, and in very trying circumstances has behaved with perfect honour and integrity. It is open to him now to follow the real bent of his inclination and the view of his own interests. If he be disposed to throw in his lot with Palmerston and Clarendon, there is an opening for him, and no one can gainsay his decision. If he resolve to act with Gladstone, he must run the risk of losing Oxford.

My feelings, like his, are in favour of what is termed 'a liberal policy.' But I deny that Palmerston is its legitimate champion, and I am quite sure that Gladstone is a more faithful exponent of those great principles—abating always matters in dispute on ecclesiastical questions.

I look upon you also as the head of Peel's surviving friends, and as the rallying-point for those who are really attached to Conservative Reform at home and to Non-intervention abroad. These friends are few, and are daily becoming fewer; but the principles are sound, the men are honest, and while they hang together they may still render service to the State.

Next day came a letter from Gladstone all but declaring war on Palmerston.

HAWARDEN, *November 10, 1856.*

I fully share in your wish to find yourself anywhere at such a juncture except in the situation you hold,

one of great responsibility for the conduct or misconduct of public affairs. For personal comfort I would gladly do any act not of cowardice to be away; but no such act is open to me, and you, I know, would not think of one.

The misery of having strife stirred up in all quarters is greatly aggravated by our political isolation. The pain and strain of acts of public duty are multiplied tenfold by the want of a clear and firm ground from which visibly to act. But it appears as if we were coming to a point at which foreign affairs would for the time give domestic politics their form.

Who will support Palmerston I know not. During the past session it is hard to say which side of the House was worse. But, with a full reserve for what I may learn between this time and February, it seems to me as if the first and foremost duty of an independent member at that day would probably be to put the present Minister out of his office.

Ever most sincerely and warmly yours,
W. E. GLADSTONE.

Sir James Graham replies :

November 15.—I remember well that Peel used to advise that no great decision should ever be taken until the last possible moment, and that all foregone conclusions should be avoided in speculative cases. It will be wise to decide in February on matters as they stand in February.

With respect to myself, I cannot tell what a day may bring forth, but I have no intention of deserting my post while I remain a member of the House of Commons, and by your side I hope to fight for the opinions which we entertain in common on the great questions now at issue. My inclination would lead me to the maintenance of a neutral position; my sense of public duty in the last emergency might drive me into an opposite course.

We shall have ample time for more mature reflection, and for consultation with friends.

The correspondence continues :

From Mr. Gladstone

November 21.—I fully feel the force of your reference to Peel's precept, one of the wisest and most needful which he ever embodied in his life.

The unhappy difference between [him and] us is this, that he had, and knew himself to have, at his back the means which would enable him, when he decided, to act with effect. We, when the case is ripe for action, find ourselves without the means.

To Mr. Gladstone

November 22.—There is truth in the distinction you draw between our position and Peel's with reference to postponements of decisions as to conduct in Parliament until the last moment. Still it is wise to shape a course with the chart before one—with all the dangers ascertained as far as circumstances will allow. The sands around us are shifting sands, and, though I have no faith in any effectual resistance to Palmerston's policy within his Cabinet, yet retention of power is his sole object, and at the last moment he will make any concession which public opinion may demand.

To displace Palmerston would be the best cure if it were possible, and if a safer and better Administration could be formed on his overthrow. But I doubt the existence of these postulates at the present moment.

To the Duke of Newcastle

November 23.—I am sincerely glad to hear that you are Lord Lieutenant of Nottingham. It is creditable to Palmerston, and leaves you with his free and honourable consent exactly in the position towards his Government which you wish to occupy, not bound, but favourably disposed.

I am constantly repelled by my deep sense of the danger of the foreign policy of the Government. An intimate alliance with the Emperor Napoleon never had any charms for me, but a quarrel with him, and with Russia also, on the frivolous grounds to which we are now committed in opposition to France, appears to me the height of folly.

To Sidney Herbert

November 30.—I am not surprised at Wortley's¹ decision to join the Government. In honour the course was quite open to him, and it was really a question of personal considerations. I shall sincerely rejoice in his success, and his presence on the Treasury Bench will add to the pain and to the difficulty of thwarting, much more of opposing, Palmerston's Government.

Yet all that I said and thought in 1850 of his foreign policy is verified to the fullest extent by his recent management of our foreign relations; and the error which I committed, entertaining those fixed opinions, was not in leaving, but in joining his Administration.

Mr. Gladstone now wrote more urgently :

November 29.—The subject of our recent correspondence weighs heavily on my mind; and Wortley's secession from us seems to me to force home the duty of further considering our position before the meeting of Parliament.

As to Lord Palmerston, who *is* the Government, I think your views and mine are very closely allied. I expect from him, with scarcely a shadow of doubt, a foreign policy keeping us in perpetual hot water; large establishments which will undoubtedly be needed to sustain it; the utter ruin of the financial policy of 1853; and general legislative inefficiency. Here are 'Four Points' with a vengeance.

Less than such an array would, I suspect, if Lord Derby had been in office, long ago have placed me among his most resolute opponents. And yet I sit from year to year giving to the Government unvalued (and justly unvalued) support, or else an opposition late, isolated, and fruitless.

I scarcely feel that this ought to continue in the case of a man who thinks Lord Palmerston is a bad Minister for this country, *and* who thinks Lord Derby would be a better; and that though he would bring with him on the whole inferior men to fill the departments, yet the

¹ Hon. J. A. Stuart Wortley, son of Lord Wharnccliffe, joined Palmerston as Solicitor-General 1856-57

Ministry as a whole would do infinitely less mischief and—either of its own accord or under compulsion—considerably more good.

I have no prejudices against the Liberal party ; but I see that it means, while snubbing Lord Palmerston occasionally, to support him on the whole. I have never been a member of that party in the strict, or rather in any, sense ; and I care for no party except as an instrument of good government. The Liberal party would be useful in opposition, but is at present, and is likely to continue, an instrument of bad government.

I shall come to no hasty conclusions in this matter ; but your invariable frankness and warm kindness are such that I could not but drop this word, though it is a word that even within myself I scarcely had articulated.

To this avowal of preference for the Conservative leader, Graham thought it necessary to return a frank and full answer. He held it in honour quite open to Mr. Gladstone, on satisfactory terms, to join Lord Derby, but for himself he refused to be a party to the union.

December 1.—I am not surprised that you should be uneasy even to restlessness in your present position. I cannot gainsay the description you give of it.

It appears also that others are wearied. Wortley has gone over to the Government, and Cardwell towards the end of last session gave signs of impatience not to be mistaken. The Duke of Newcastle never partook of our views respecting the prolongation of the war and the foreign policy of the Government ; and although Herbert acted with us, I do not believe that he ever approved, or has ceased to regret, our secession from Palmerston. You and I stand almost alone in our agreement respecting the dangers of Palmerston's foreign policy, and the legislative inefficiency of his Administration.

But our relative positions are very different. You are in the flower of your age and the full bloom of your Parliamentary maturity ; I am ripened to decay. Conscious of your powers, you have yet everything to hope ;

to me nothing remains but to close a long account without dishonour. The Liberal party has no claims on you—you never belonged to it ; I deserted them once, and they have never forgiven me. The future hardly exists for me in political life, while to you it opens the fairest prospect that an honourable ambition can survey.

You say I have treated you with frankness and with a friendly disposition. Such has been my constant wish and natural impulse. My desire is not to be an impediment, but rather an assistance to you. But, as matters now stand, after a careful review of the feelings you express, and of the difficulties with which you must grapple, I have come to the conclusion that you must take your line apart from me.

It is clear to me that your strong bias is in favour of a junction with Lord Derby. I have nothing to urge against such a decision on your part, provided you take securities for giving effect to your own opinions, and for not being tied to the adoption of his, or, I should rather say, of his followers' ; and probably the lead in the House of Commons of Lord Derby's friends, on terms to be previously fixed, would give you this security.

But I cannot be a party to any such negotiation, nor can I consent to be included in any such arrangement. I wish still to remain on neutral ground ; for I cannot give my confidence to Palmerston, and I am not prepared to cross the House and join the band which surrounds Disraeli.

Happen what may, I can never cease to be your admirer and your friend ; and though we should not sit side by side, I might be useful to you, and might aid, from my old place below the gangway, the defeat of measures which we agree in condemning, and the triumph of certain great principles which were our bond of union under Peel.

If, therefore, you shall be deliberately of opinion that the time has arrived when your public duty and your private inclination lead you to negotiate a settlement with Lord Derby, let me not stand in your way. But think well, before you take the irrevocable step, what will most conduce to your own honour and the public good.

I have written to you thus fully because I see that you are impatient of delay. I have consulted no one; you have, therefore, my own genuine first impressions, whatever may be their worth. They will be received by you with indulgence as coming from one who has always rejoiced in your success, who anticipates your future triumphs, and who wishes you well from his heart.

He wrote afterwards to Lord Aberdeen :

The enclosed letter [November 29] from Gladstone will speak for itself. It was necessary that my answer should be explicit. I hope it may be approved by you. I am sure that the spirit which dictated it is kind towards Gladstone; but it was impossible for me to be hurried into the measures which he contemplates.

I now think that the session will open with Gladstone on the front bench of the Opposition. I could not follow him there, and it was right to tell him so plainly.

If the Opposition be conducted temperately and wisely, from the neutral ground I must give it frequent support, with my views on foreign and domestic policy, which are very much in accordance with Gladstone's, Church questions always excepted.

Much will depend on the degree of influence which Gladstone may be able to exercise on the counsels of Derby. Derby in the Lords and Gladstone in the Commons will make a formidable onslaught, if they act cordially together.

The advice to Gladstone Lord Aberdeen warmly approved, but not Graham's view that for himself there remained almost no political future.

Your letter to Gladstone seems to me quite perfect. With respect to yourself I think you have exaggerated the obstacles to your renewal of active and official life. I cannot admit, and I am sure the public would not, the justice of these views to their full extent. At no time were you ever able to render more valuable assistance to the country.

Mr. Gladstone made a similar protest.

December 2.—The proposition in your letter from which I most confidently dissent is that which concerns our relative positions. I feel assured that all our common friends would join me in saying that there is no man who must bear a greater share of responsibility, whether in keeping the Ministry or in dismissing it, than must you.

I think we are agreed in the four propositions stated in my last letter, which weigh upon my mind in conjunction with the probable continuance of our neutrality.

Three of these—the Foreign Policy, the large establishments, and the redemption of the pledges of 1853—will, it is almost certain, come before Parliament in the next session. It is this consideration, so far as I know myself, which converts the abstract opinion I have long held and avowed—that our neutrality is not advantageous to the country—into a practical and rather stinging reflection.

In February, 1855, I read a letter to the House of Commons containing the expression of a desire that Lord Derby should have formed a Government. I then thought, and I now think more strongly, that the country would get better government from him than from Lord Palmerston.

For all the purposes for which I value Liberalism, the Liberal party is dead. It is held together by two bonds: one, what is called the loaves and fishes, or the patronage of Government; the other, votes for the ballot and other such trash, to which I am conscientiously opposed. The Government is Liberal because it palters with one or two Liberal measures, and because Hayter gives places to Liberals; its Conservative side, I suppose, is that of its inaction and extravagance. Neither this Liberalism nor this Conservatism has merit in my eyes, and I am not disposed to abandon without a struggle the plans and the promises as to finance of which I was the organ in 1853. Upon the back of all this comes the foreign policy, which with Palmerston is in the blood and in the grain.

So far I seem to see my way, but you outstrip me

greatly from this point onwards. You say it is clear to you that my strong bias is in favour of a junction with Lord Derby.

This has been supposed and said of me for ten years. Those ten years have not supplied overmuch proof of it. Lord Derby, like other people, has been in a very false position. He has not around him a single man with whom I have ever been in intimate political relations. Where I am I have everything I can desire in that respect. Examining myself severely, I return this verdict, that, whatever be my sentiments towards Lord Derby, I am not on the whole likely to be deluded by partialities into seeking the junction you forecast.

I can get but one point beyond that which I have now reached. There is a policy going a-begging, the general policy which Peel in 1841 took office to support—the policy of peace abroad, of economy, of financial equilibrium, of steady resistance to abuses, and promotion of practical improvements at home ; with a disinclination to questions of organic change gratuitously raised. To this is now added—happily no longer a question of party—the accomplishment of what yet remains undone for the liberation of commerce from shackles that it ought not to bear.

To know that this will be the policy of Lord Derby and his friends is the first condition necessary to make it possible that I should take my place in his ranks. If that possibility were established, it would be in his *ranks* only that I should desire to find such a place.

In those parts of your letter which I have not particularly noticed, pray understand me, so far as they contain opinions other than such as express your estimate of me, to concur. For the feeling which pervades the whole accept my warmest thanks.

In reply Sir James Graham sets forth first his own view of the support to be expected from Lord Derby's party and from Lord Palmerston's respectively to 'the policy of Peel'—the policy of peace, economy, toleration, and free trade. Then he goes on to impress on

Mr. Gladstone how much responsibility must devolve on him should he decide to join the Conservative party.

To Mr. Gladstone

December 3, 1856.

The policy of Peel in 1841, of which you trace the outline, is still the policy to which I adhere.

But this confession of faith is no security for practical conduct. Most of the members of Palmerston's Administration would make this same confession to-morrow, and Lord Derby, who did once make it, overthrew Peel's Government by his secession.

In fact at this moment there is not much difference in creed between the followers of Lord Derby and of Lord Palmerston. Indeed, of the two the Derbyites have been the more warlike. None have been so urgent in the demand of large naval and military establishments. This has been their tone ever since the termination of the war; and Lord Ellenborough, Lord Derby's War Minister, has plans of Asiatic conquest, and of a standing army formed on the Napoleonic and Continental model. With respect to Irish Education and Maynooth the policy of Peel is upheld by the Government; Lord Derby and his friends seek to subvert it.

It is possible that with a change of advisers Lord Derby might be induced to return to better counsels, but he has shown no indication of any such disposition, and, surrounded as he is, there is no great chance of it.

You talk of 'taking a place in the ranks of Lord Derby,' if you were certain that he and his friends would adopt the policy which you approve. A place in the ranks! Surely you are aware that such a position is not possible for you. Nothing but the lead is any security for the reinforcement and triumph of your honest opinions, and if you are not the leader in the Commons, of whom are you to be the follower?

From Mr. Gladstone

HAWARDEN, December 4, 1856.

It is no part of my duty to vindicate the conduct of Lord Derby's friends. There is a question much nearer

me which does not mix itself in my view so much as I think it does in yours with the further one ; namely, whether, quite independently of the possibility of joining Lord Derby, it would be right for us to assist in putting out Lord Palmerston ? This is the only question on which I pretend to see my way at all.

I dare say many members of the Government would take my test ; but there is one [Palmerston] who would not, and he is *instar omnium*.

If I have not more pointedly thanked you for offering under all the circumstances your counsel for the advancement of our common views, it is because not only is it well-nigh intolerable to me to contemplate the contingency of our differing, but I flatter myself that that evil day is not yet to arrive.

The rest of the letter goes into details of finance, to which Sir James Graham replies :

December 6.—In compliance with your wish, I have noted down seriatim my observations on each of your financial desiderata.

It would require a Government, and a very strong one, to give legislative effect to the large financial scheme which you contemplate. It must be grafted on a pacific policy, and on a moderate scale of public expenditure.

The measures, thus combined, would in my opinion be conducive in the highest degree to the public welfare and to the national happiness and contentment. But it is not under Palmerston that such blessings are to be anticipated. I fear that they are equally improbable under the rule of Derby and Disraeli.

The measures are conceived in the spirit of Peel, and are your own. You alone in high office can carry them. How to get you there, and to sustain you there with honour and full efficiency, is the real question.

Were it not for Palmerston, I believe that the Liberal party is the natural supporter of a financial scheme such as yours. You carried the Succession Tax by their firm adherence, in spite of the opposition of Derby and of the landed aristocracy in both Houses. They would rally

round you again in aid of such a scheme as this, fully developed, and ably stated, with all the attractions and inducements which no one living is able to throw around it with so much grace and power as yourself.

But Palmerston bars the way with his foreign broils and warlike propensities, which unfortunately are congenial to the temper and spirit of the nation.

We shall begin with foreign affairs at the opening of the session, but we shall soon arrive at finance, and then is your opportunity.

The stand must be made on the financial ground ; you must wait for them there. There you are master of the field. The public will be on your side.

From this position you may bid for the support of either the Liberal or the Conservative party, and you will naturally cast in your lot with the side which gives you support, and which offers you the means of carrying a great scheme of finance into practical effect.

All this would be done in the face of day and in the presence of the public, and would appear to me far better for you and safer than any private arrangements or premature and secret negotiations.

‘ Private arrangements ’ were not an imaginary peril. On December 15 Mr. Gladstone wrote :

About a fortnight ago I had an intimation from Lord Derby that he wished to confer with me on public affairs, and would, unless he learned I was averse to it, make some communication to me to that effect.

I trust that you will not disapprove of this. In my own mind I am satisfied that it is likely materially to enlarge my means of judging whether we have any prospect of doing good in public affairs, or whether we must continue in what I feel to be impotence and uselessness.

As to the financial proposals, I rejoice beyond measure in your general approval. But I feel that in the present state of Parliament an infinite uncertainty hangs over the whole of them. As to the cessation of the income tax in 1860, however, I feel bound even in personal honour to make every practicable struggle for it.

I heartily agree with you that, under whatever circumstances, nothing must be done except 'in the face of day and in the presence of the public.'

This last counsel, however, Graham thought it well to enforce by repetition, in view of the risks attending such communications as he knew to be in hand.

December 16.—I am glad that the first advance is made by Lord Derby, not by you.

My doctrine is sound respecting the paramount necessity of all such transactions being above board, and open to the gaze of a most suspicious public. They require that their interest shall, not in terms, but in reality, be the prime and moving consideration. Measures, therefore, which command their approbation and stimulate their active support are the only safe foundations of any such political arrangements.

December 27.—I am glad that you still occupy the high ground of perfect independence unfettered by private negotiations.

With you I am most anxious that Lord Derby and his friends should take the right course with respect to both finance and foreign affairs, which are very much bound together.

Before Parliament meets, through *The Quarterly Review*, you will have marked out what that course ought to be. The debate on the Address will remove any shadow of doubt as to our opinions and views, and there will be an immense advantage, when challenged, in being able to assert with truth that we have entered into no covert party combination. Concert in action flowing from the open source of concurrent opinion in matters of the very highest public interest will be regarded with more favour than any new party combination based on a private arrangement, which may be regarded as an intrigue.

Six pages of detail follow, on financial and other current questions on which Sir James saw no difficulty in concerted action. Mr. Gladstone answers, 'You will

be glad to know that I have heard nothing more on the subject of the formidable *invitation* ' ; and, after dwelling on some of the points in what he calls ' your most interesting letter,' ends in a lighter vein :

You will be amused when I tell you that my three brothers and I are of one mind about the foreign policy, we standing thus—

1. A thick-and-thin Protectionist,
2. A very stout Radical indeed,
3. A moderate Derbyite,
4. (Myself) nobody knows what.

To which Graham replies :

I wish that the agreement among your brothers in foreign affairs were a safe index of the political thermometer. The truth is, the people of this country delight in war, but hate paying for it. Considerable bluster even is palatable to them, but the taxpayer is the flapper who restores their reason and brings them to their senses. I am glad, therefore, that your article places finance in the foreground.

1857

Much in the same fashion began the new year.

To Lord Aberdeen

January 20, 1857.

I rejoice that you and Gladstone have called Herbert into your councils. His feelings are most correct, his attachments are warm and sincere, his impulses and dispositions most honourable and generous. His leanings, moreover, are to the Liberal side, which in my humble judgment is the right bias.

To Mr. Sidney Herbert

January 29, 1857.

You probably are right, that Palmerston is still in the ascendant, and that he will not quail before a multitude

of divided opponents, more especially if his secret friends outnumber his covert enemies. . . .

Gladstone's strong ground will be finance and expenditure ; and, however much Palmerston may dislike this financial policy, it is more likely to win public favour and to stand the test of a general election than any other great question now open.

The session of 1857 was to afford a fresh example of Palmerston's propensity to war, and of the support he could count on from the nation.

The Queen's Speech informed Parliament that acts of violence—insults to the British flag, and infractions of treaty rights committed by local Chinese authorities, and a pertinacious refusal of redress—had rendered it necessary to have recourse to measures of force to obtain satisfaction.

In reply Cobden moved a resolution condemning 'the violent measures resorted to at Canton.'

The Chief Commissioner of Trade at Canton, Sir John Bowring, a personal friend of Cobden, and a member of the Peace Society, had, in Lord Derby's words, 'destroyed the ports of a friendly country, bombarded and shelled an undefended and commercial city, and shed the blood of unwarlike and innocent people.'

His pretext for such acts of war in time of peace was that Chinese local authorities had arrested as pirates Chinese subjects, while trying to escape by running up a British flag, which they had no right to fly.

Palmerston, as usual, was prompt to support a British agent, right or wrong. Graham and the Peelites, Russell and his friends, and of course Bright and the Peace Party, joining with the regular Opposition under Disraeli, carried Cobden's vote of censure by

a majority of sixteen. Palmerston at once appealed to the country to 'uphold the British flag,' and was confirmed in power. This was contrary to the sanguine expectation of Cobden, who counselled Graham that the Chinese question certainly afforded the best cry for the election.

From Mr. Cobden

March 16, 1857.

Were I in your position, I would fight the battle on the Chinese question, and make the people thoroughly understand it. It is more than a mere chance fracas. A great principle is at stake; whether, as in Turkey, a pacha may do as he likes, or whether—as it used to be in England—our public servants shall be responsible to Parliament. I am sure there is no safer battle-ground than the Chinese business. Our opponents will try to escape the issue, but we must rub their noses in it.

Ten days before this letter was written, Graham—in the very same spirit in which, in 1832, he had instructed Lord William Bentinck to pursue a policy of peace in China—had taken up his ground in a letter to Carlisle.

To Mr. Mounsey

March 6, 1857.

An early dissolution of Parliament is impending; the success of Mr. Cobden's resolution is the immediate cause.

In the course of this short session I have given three votes in opposition to the Government: the first on the Budget, involving the question of expenditure; the second on Mr. Locke King's motion with respect to an extension of the county franchise; the third in relation to the China War.

I have been true to my principles of Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform, and on two out of these three occasions my colleague and I have voted on opposite sides.

It is said that I am acting in concert with Lord Derby. I give the most positive denial to this assertion. Lord Derby has sought no communication whatever with me ; I have had none with him ; all political connection between us is negatived conclusively by my vote and speech on the reform of the county representation, which is the touchstone of adherence to the Derby party ; and the hostile attitude of the Yellows towards me in Carlisle is the best evidence that I have not shaped my course to win their favour.

Being unable to support the Government on the important questions to which I have referred, I have thought it my duty to stand aloof from all secret combinations, and to give effect to my independent judgment in concert only with two or three of the remaining colleagues of Sir Robert Peel who were united with me in the repeal of the Corn Laws, and in the establishment of the Free Trade policy. I have maintained an independent position ; I have intrigued with no one ; I have confederated with no one. My approximation is more towards Lord John Russell than any other parliamentary leader, but with him I have no understanding express or implied.

My whole career has been open in the face of day, and my reasons in vindication of that course have been fully stated in Parliament. I have nothing to add or to retract. My constituents must decide on those reasons, and either give or withhold their support according to their deliberate judgment.

But the Blue party must come to a prompt decision. They must make their choice between Mr. Ferguson and me. After the vote on Mr. Cobden's motion we cannot stand together.

I place myself in your hands for the purpose of ascertaining what are the opinions and intentions of the Blue party. I await your answer with the composure which a sense of duties faithfully performed never fails to impart.

At the hustings Sir James, with the full courage of these opinions, withstood the popular cry for war.

I voted [he said] against war with China eighteen years ago, I voted against it yesterday, I would do so again to-morrow. I think it an unwise and unworthy war. Englishmen ought to fight their equals, not to trample on their inferiors.

The effect of his appeal was striking.

I never recollect [said one of his audience] witnessing so complete a triumph over adverse and suspicious feelings in so brief a space of time ; and though at the end I still continued to think him wrong on the China question, I felt that there was not in Cumberland, or perhaps in England, any man who could have effaced the impression made by that speech, which in manner, gesture, tone, and delivery was the most marvellous I ever heard.¹

Carlisle electors generally were so impressed. The Radical member who had supported Palmerston was ousted by a Conservative, and Sir James was returned at the head of the poll.

Lord John Russell also kept his seat for London, and Mr. Gladstone for Oxford University. But 'the Peace party' fared ill. Cobden failed at Huddersfield, Fox at Oldham, Miall at Rochdale, Bright and Milner Gibson in Manchester, and the total result was to give Palmerston a new lease of power.

After the election Graham wrote warmly to Cobden :

Your country cannot dispense with your services ; and much as you have already accomplished, more remains for you to do.

My first desire is to know that you are well again ; my next wish is to learn whether any arrangement can be devised for your immediate return to Parliament. Is it not possible that an opening might be made for you

¹ Torrens' *Life of Graham*, ii. 635.

in South Lancashire ? That division owes you a large debt, which it should seize this opportunity of repaying.

Others may wait to fill vacancies which may occur ; in your case it is of great importance that a chance-medley defeat should be covered by an immediate triumph. I do ardently hope that the effort will be made, and that you will not discourage it. While Lancashire has a seat to bestow, it will be a disgrace to the county that you should be for one hour excluded from the House of Commons.

This incident led to further friendly correspondence.

From Mr. Cobden

MIDHURST, April 24, 1857.

I enclose a letter which I have received from Mr. Bright. Independently of the allusion to yourself, which induces me to send it, you will, I am sure, be gratified to see how clearly and forcibly [after an illness] he can write, and with what philosophical fortitude he bears the ungrateful treatment he has received from his Manchester constituents.

Mr. Bright to Mr. Cobden

VENICE, April 16, 1857.

I am much afraid that anything proposed in the way of Reform will be a sham. A good Bill giving suffrage and redistributing seats cannot be carried except by a revolutionary movement as in 1832, and this is not very likely to occur, nor is it very desirable.

My notion of the true policy of a true Reformer is this. Let the first Bill give, say, a £10 suffrage to the counties, and a household, or rating, or rated suffrage to the boroughs, with the ballot to perfect it. Let this Bill pass, saying nothing for the present about the redistribution. Such a measure would give a large majority in Parliament far more favourable to an honest redistribution than can now be obtained. This redistribution is the difficulty and the danger.

Lord John would be disposed to correct the democratic

tendency of suffrage extension to retaining an unjust distribution of seats. . . .

If you see Sir James Graham, talk this matter over with him. He can see clearly, and has no great burden of prejudices, and I think he cares less for the House of Bedford and for the family domination which has prevailed since 1688 than Lord John Russell does.

A bad, an unjust, and a disappointing Reform Bill is a revolutionary measure.

To Mr. Cobden

Private.

GROSVENOR PLACE, April 26, 1857.

I thank you sincerely for sending me Mr. Bright's letter. It is excellent both in temper and in substance, and the man who wrote it is honestly zealous in his desire to serve his country, and has overcome the difficulty of governing himself.

According to your desire I have shown the letter to no one except Lord Aberdeen. If it were published to-morrow, it would do honour both to you and to Mr. Bright. It is conclusive evidence, if such were wanting, of the purity of your motives, and of the praiseworthy objects which you have in view. Such confidential communications, in such circumstances, very rarely see the light.

Mr. Bright's observations with respect to a new Reform Bill deserve the most careful consideration. Lord John Russell does not confer with me, and I know nothing of his views and intentions. I conclude that all plans on the part of individuals will remain suspended until the intentions of the Government have been made known.

It will be a 'dodge,' I have no doubt, but it will be successful in 'gaining a year.' Time is of value to every Minister in possession of power; it does not sink in value when weighed by a Premier at the age of seventy-three.

It is important that honest Reformers should if possible come to an understanding as to the course to be adopted. Mr. Bright's plan would be the simplest, most practicable, and the best, did not Ballot stand in the way.

Ballot is a serious obstacle. My doubts and fears respecting it are grave and manifold. But it is the centre

of attraction to which the public mind is disposed to gravitate, and the public voice in its favour may become irresistible.

Warm acknowledgments of Sir James Graham's conduct in the China debate came from two very different quarters—from a brother Member, and from the Admiral whom Bowring had ordered to bombard Canton.

From Mr. Samuel Warren, M.P.

COWDRAY PARK, *March 29, 1857.*

I write, I hope not intrusively, to congratulate you warmly on your triumphant re-election, crushing a clique which was a miniature of the monster one that tried to do for Lord John Russell the same that was attempted at Carlisle.

When you both re-enter the House as two distinguished statesmen who have in right English fashion triumphed over dictation and mean and insolent intrigue, you ought to be received with hearty cheering.

From Admiral Sir Michael Seymour

H.M.S. 'CALCUTTA,' HONG KONG, *May 9, 1857.*

The debates on the war in China have reached Hong Kong, and I hasten to express to you how much gratified I have been at the manner in which you did me the favour of alluding to me in the House of Commons on that occasion; nor can I sufficiently value the importance of such testimony from one whose opinions have so acknowledged an influence and national weight.

The generosity of your act is the more deeply impressed on me when I call to mind the circumstances under which you thus kindly remembered an absent officer, placed in a somewhat unusual position, and performing duties of a complicated nature in a distant part of the world. I am therefore truly grateful.

As the meeting of the new Parliament drew near, Sir James Graham began again to apprehend open defection of Mr. Gladstone. The following letter appears to have

been written under depression of spirit, yearning for some respite from impending political isolation.

To Mr. Sidney Herbert

April 15, 1857.

Whatever may be Gladstone's ultimate decision, I should be sorry for his own sake to see him cross the House on the meeting of Parliament. This act would be an avowed severance from the Liberal party, and a junction with the followers of Disraeli, when no new circumstance justifies the change of position, unless, indeed, the public voice unequivocally pronounced in favour of Palmerston be so regarded.

I cannot consider either the China question or the Budget as finally settled by the dissolution. The China question assumes a new aspect from the time of the appointment of Lord Elgin with full powers to treat. Cobden's motion would never have been made, or never carried, if this announcement had preceded it. But I never can succumb to Palmerston's insolent declaration, that those who supported this motion 'made the humiliation and degradation of their country a stepping-stone to power.'

The financial questions which must be discussed in the approaching session are most grave, and I do not anticipate any difference of opinion with Gladstone respecting them. . . .

In the meanwhile it would appear to me natural and decorous that those who have been united by every bond of private friendship, and of a common sense of public duty, should continue to sit and act together, until some serious difference of opinion shall arise. It may not occur, and then the pain of separation will be averted. If it occur, let the ground be broad and intelligible, and let the dissolution of the union be in the face of day. The political connection will then be severed, but the debt due to private friendship will have been satisfied; for we shall have maintained the union to the last moment consistently with the higher claims which love of country and public duty may impose.

The Peelites as a party are gone. Indeed, I have

never recognised their existence in that sense since the formation of Lord Aberdeen's Government, of which the avowed bases were fusion and Reform.

But though the Peelites have disappeared from the stage, yet you, Gladstone, and I still linger on it. We have acted together for a long time in very critical circumstances. Rightly or wrongly, we left Palmerston's Government in company, having joined it apart from Lord Aberdeen and the Duke of Newcastle. Out of office we have since acted together, indicating to the public no difference of opinion, except with regard to Reform ; and it would appear to me to be natural that we should continue so to act, until this difference by the force of events may be so widened as to render separation necessary.

The possibility of such a sad necessity is too painful for me to contemplate. I will therefore do nothing which may seem to precipitate it. I shall take my old place below the gangway [on the Government side], if the courtesy of the new House will permit me still to occupy it.

There I shall remain a spectator ; miserable indeed if left alone and deprived of two such allies as you and Gladstone.

Age reminds me that my time for departure is drawing near ; and Bacon at the end of his essay on friendship most truly says, ' If a man have not a friend, he may quit the stage.' This, I trust, will not be my sad lot.

My feelings towards Gladstone are most friendly, although I regret for his own sake some steps which he has taken. Towards you I will make no professions, for I am not aware of any difference between us.

Fanny continues very ill, and my painful anxieties on her account do not diminish.

CHAPTER XIV

1857-58

Illness and death of Lady Graham—Correspondence with Mr. Gladstone and with Lord John Russell—Proposed Reform Bill—India Bill—Palmerston ‘a Dangerous Minister.’

IN the autumn of 1857 Sir James Graham’s life was clouded over by growing anxiety about the health of Lady Graham. Bound each to each in early youth by ties of warmest affection, for eight-and-thirty years they had lived on together—for the last thirty years in his ancestral home—sharing every joy and sorrow, hope or fear. But now, as months passed on, it became more painfully clear to him that her life was drawing to a close. He bore this, as he bore all other trials, with fortitude and resignation. But in letters even on public questions to his friends there are touching references to the burden of grief that lay heavy on him ; and the prolonged strain, affecting his health, left him for the few years that he survived it in some degree a broken man. Lady Graham died at Cowes in October.

In August letters were exchanged with Mr. Gladstone on the death of his sister-in-law.

From Mr. Gladstone

HAGLEY, *August 19, 1857.*

I write from a house of mourning and of desolation. To say that poor Lyttelton is left a widower at forty-one with twelve children is saying much, and yet it is also

saying little, for none but those who knew his wife can know what life and light she was to him and to all who came near her. From one end of it to the other England could not show a purer or nobler specimen of the true English mother.

And her death has been like her life. She seemed as if inwardly she had no change to make, but only one onward step to take; and even the tears and sobs with which she was surrounded could not invade the heavenly serenity of her soul. May we all follow her into the peace of God, which passeth all understanding.

From Sir James Graham

NETHERBY, August 21, 1857.

I feel deeply and sincerely for Lord Lyttelton, and you, and your wife. The loss is yours, the gain is hers whom you loved so well.

I often think of those blessed words, 'To be with Christ . . . is far better.' How happy the change when the faint hope becomes a certainty, and when all the sorrows, the fears, the passions, and the pains of this world shall be exchanged for that glory 'which the heart of man cannot conceive, but which shall be revealed.'

I leave this place with great regret, but I go to rejoin my poor wife at Cowes, to which place she has been removed in the hope that she may derive some benefit from sea air. My future plans and movements are sadly uncertain.

In September Lord John Russell began a correspondence on the best means of extending the Reform Act of 1832 without departing from the old principles of Moderate Reform. Some of the letters deal also with questions raised by the terrible Sepoy Mutiny. In continuing for some months these discussions it is pleasing to perceive that Lord John was actuated partly by a kind desire to engage his correspondent's thoughts on interests other than the sad ones forced upon him by impending bereavement.

From Lord John Russell

MINTO, *September 3, 1857.*

I don't know whether you have any definite notions as to what ought to be the Reform Bill, but, as the only surviving member of the Committee to whom I submitted my plan of 1831, I will tell you what I think might be made the basis of a Bill for 1858.

1. Disfranchise all boroughs having fewer than two hundred and fifty £10 voters.

2. Place in Schedule B. [to lose one member] those having less than five hundred £10 voters.

3. Give right of voting, as in Bill of 1854, to ten-pounders in counties.

4. Add to the £10 voters in boroughs the municipal voters, *as burgesses*—your own idea. Leave out the minority clause. The rest nearly as in the Bill of 1854.

This is short, but, I trust, comprehensive. I hope, at all events, you and I shall act together, whatever Gladstone may do.

To Lord John Russell

COWES, *September 11, 1857.*

Your letter found me in great tribulation on account of the dangerous illness of my wife, whose condition I considered hopeless until yesterday, and whose partial recovery is still very uncertain. In these circumstances I have been unable to give to the subject of your inquiry the deliberate consideration which its importance deserves. It has, however, long occupied my thoughts, and on some leading points my mind is made up. I add with pleasure that there is little or no difference of opinion between us.

I think that no measure of enfranchisement only, without disfranchisement, is reasonable, or ought to satisfy.

At the same time I am well aware of the great difficulty which awaits the attempt to carry a measure including disfranchisement. Combined opposition of the most violent kind will be offered to it, and it is doubtful whether countervailing enthusiasm in support of it can be anticipated.

The Bill of 1854 fixed the extent of the proposed disfranchisement very fairly, and I should be disposed to adhere to that Bill as closely as I could ; I quite agree that the minority clause must be an exception.

It is desirable to maintain a marked difference between the right of voting in counties and the right in cities and boroughs. If the £10 occupation franchise be extended to counties, the municipal franchise must be made the parliamentary franchise in boroughs. I should have no fears of the democratic tendency of this arrangement ; but it will not be so regarded by all Reformers ; and Brougham is loud already in denouncing it.

Great firmness and skill will be necessary to frustrate the effort which will be made to establish electoral districts dependent on population. It would destroy the balance of interests, which in our system of representation is most salutary, and would give undue preponderance to numbers.

The leaning of my mind is in favour of giving members to the Inns of Court, to universities in larger proportions, and perhaps also to some other corporate and learned bodies.

These, however, are matters of detail, quite open to discussion and further deliberation. The great principles are those to which I have adverted, and on which we are agreed.

But all these domestic questions sink into insignificance compared with the sad state of our Indian Empire. Where is a fit military dictator to be found ? Wellington, Napier, Hardinge, Raglan—all are gone. India was won for us by a succession of great men ; it cannot be saved by any ordinary one.

Lord John replied :

September 16.—It is a satisfaction to me to find that we so nearly agree on the subject of a Reform Bill.

There is only one point which I should wish to urge when we meet. It is this. The diminution of members for small boroughs made it desirable to find some mode of entrance for Liberal Tories and temperate Whigs, to keep the ship steady. The minority clause would have

done this. Failing the minority clause, I think the disfranchisement should not be carried so far as we proposed in 1854.

As to India ! I fear Palmerston took too sanguine a view of our troubles there ; but yet, though there has been much neglect and much delay, I do not think we require a Clive to restore matters. I believe if Colin Campbell were entrusted with the whole power, civil and military, he would bring India under obedience in less than a year.

I think we ought to have a Committee of Inquiry next session, and endeavour to frame a better Government for India at home than a weak representation of an imaginary body of merchants.

To Lord John Russell

COWES, *September 22, 1857.*

The desire to admit ' Liberal Tories and temperate Whigs ' could not be pleaded as a justification of diminished disfranchisement in lieu of the minority clause. The plea would be repudiated by Reformers.

I should say that the counteracting balance to the extent of the disfranchisement might be sought with advantage in the enlargement of the county representation by subdivision, and in conferring the franchise on educated corporate bodies.

It must be remembered, however, I admit, that we have not to frame a Ukase, but to carry a measure through Parliament ; and with this view it is necessary to consider not only what is just and desirable, but also what is possible and expedient without a violation of sound principle.

I have no desire needlessly to extend disfranchisement, and I foresee that the greater the number of seats that are affected the greater will be the difficulty in obtaining legislative sanction to the measure. Great also will be the struggle in the distribution of the seats.

There is no hope for the success of any such measure but in the hands of a Government. Palmerston will not propose it. The abandonment of the minority clause releases all our colleagues of 1854 from their adoption of the Reform Bill of that year ; and with the exception of

Lord Aberdeen and me I doubt whether any one of that Cabinet would support you in the endeavour to renew that measure, if the minority clause be omitted. Very few of them would be willing to support it even if the clause were retained.

Palmerston is master of the field. He will stave off an effective Reform Bill.

I wish I could answer your kind inquiries respecting my poor wife more favourably. She lingers, but does not recover.

From Lord John Russell

September.—I write again, though I have little to say, because I have leisure, and it is good for you to give some of your attention to public topics.

If we get good news in January from India, the Government will launch their scheme under favourable auspices. I consider the last news as very bad.¹

To Lord John Russell

COWES, October 8, 1857.

There are bounds to the just apprehension of ‘bringing in the Tories.’ No principle is involved in the maintenance of Lord Palmerston’s Administration, and, if his foreign policy be indefensible, I see no reason why the fear of Lord Derby should avert his fate.

I have no personal enmity against Palmerston, but I think him a dangerous Minister, and only entitled to support when he is right—by no means to be upheld when he is flagrantly in the wrong.

The House of Commons, although a good judge of the general merits of an Administration and of their measures as a whole, is bewildered in a labyrinth of details, and miscarries in its judgment when it attempts to deal with minute particulars. It is safer and easier to displace a Ministry than to change and direct its policy by the active intervention of Parliament.

¹ Delhi not taken, Lucknow not relieved, Sir Henry Lawrence dead, all the troops in Oude in mutiny, Sir Hugh Wheeler killed at Cawnpore. The garrison, forced by famine, had surrendered to Nana Sahib, who had massacred them all.

I have pleasure in hearing from you, and I am grateful for your kindness in wishing to divert my thoughts for a moment from the sadness which surrounds me here.

From Lord John Russell

October 11.—I have the same opinion of Palmerston that you have, namely, that he is a dangerous Minister—dangerous from his over-confidence and light way of giving offence to foreign powers, where no interest is at stake.

But the people of England, inspired by *The Times*, have not found this out, and attribute to cabal, to jealousy, and to intrigue every just criticism or censure upon the Government. My opinion is that they must find out the truth by the light of events.

A fortnight later Sir James Graham writes to Lord Aberdeen :

COWES, *October 25, 1857.*

The last sad struggle is ended. My beloved wife died here this morning at 1 a.m. I intend the funeral to take place in Whippingham Churchyard, a spot which she and I visited and admired thirty-eight years ago, when we came here after our marriage.

Letters of condolence poured in.

From the Prince Consort

MY DEAR SIR JAMES,—

I cannot refrain from expressing to you the Queen's and my very sincere sympathy with you and your family in your present heavy affliction. Lady Graham will be universally regretted, for all who knew her must have entertained the highest regard for her ; but as a wife and mother her loss must be irreparable.

May the Almighty who has sent you this trial give you the strength to bear it, and that consolation which He alone can bestow—is the prayer of ever yours truly,

ALBERT.

WINDSOR CASTLE, *October 28, 1857.*

From Lord Brougham

MY DEAR FRIEND,—

I read your letter [announcing the approaching end] with tears—shed before I came to your most kind and touching expressions—tears at the most sad account you give of her. I pray to God you may still be spared this heavy blow.

October 31.—I must tell you how deep and universal is the feeling for her, and the sympathy with you. Of this I had the most certain proofs at the meeting, and my letters from all quarters testify the same.

Let me again recommend my only remedy in these sad cases—hard work.

Yours most affectionately,
H. BROUGHAM.

From Mr. Sidney Herbert

What parting can be so bitter as this, when the bitterness is measured by the happiness you have enjoyed, and the value and the charm of her whom you have lost ?

From Mrs. Norton

‘The heart knoweth its own bitterness,’ and also its own consolations. I have nothing to add except the *woman’s* feeling that, were my soul in her soul’s stead, there would have been something sweet in dying and being buried where so much of her first happiness was. She was so very fond of those scenes in the Isle of Wight where you had been early together.

Longfellow’s words crowd into my mind :

All is over now, the hope, and the fear, and the sorrow,
All the dull deep pain, and the constant anguish of parting.

For a great anguish it must have been during the weary time since her recovery was no longer expected, and nothing was left to you but to watch her struggle with approaching death.

And now all is over. There is peace, and rest. And she, who was so beautiful, lies like a withered rose, awaiting that resurrection of which the life of flowers—

for ever ending and renewing—was surely granted by God as an emblem, to help the eyes that are dim with tears to cease from weeping.

All the comforting thoughts that *can* come with death and separation are linked with this sorrow, and I hope they are strong enough to overbear the sense of loss that is her gain.

God bless you, dear uncle, and make the feeling of the deep value your love and cherishing had in that vanished life a comfort to you now that she is—as I firmly believe—with the company of angels, past the joys and anxieties of earth and the imperfect guardianship of human affection.

From the Bishop of Oxford (Wilberforce)

I have endeavoured to pray for you that in this time of great darkness you may be upheld and blessed. I know from the bitterest experience what a time it is. On me the blow fell far earlier, when there was probably before me a longer loneliness. Yet even me, so stricken and so unworthy, the merciful Lord did not forsake in that darkest hour. . . .

Doubtless He has great lessons for you, lessons only to be learned by you in that school, and therefore has He placed you in it. It will be His good pleasure to teach them to you and to uphold you.

From Lord John Russell

PEMBROKE LODGE, October 27, 1857.

For her pure spirit a relief from suffering can be but an entrance to immediate happiness. But for you who are left I fear no preparations will enable you to bear calmly such a loss.

I do not know, indeed, that I should have ventured to intrude on your sorrow, were it not that nineteen years ago I had a similar affliction to undergo.

I cannot say whether business or society was the most hateful to me. But in religion I found a consolation, and I have no doubt you will have recourse to the same sacred support.

To Lord John Russell

COWES, *October 28, 1857.*

I was prepared for the heavy blow which has fallen on me, but the weight of it is greater than I had expected.

Severance after a union of nearly forty years is a heavy wrench, and were my hopes limited to this world I should be most miserable. But I venture to look beyond the grave in humble trust, and in the direction to which you elevate my thoughts; and I perceive the vanity of grieving for her whom I must quickly follow.

Henceforth my first duty will be to prepare, and to disentangle myself more and more from the ties which bind to earth, and from the vain competitions and angry rivalries which divide mankind. My wish is not to withdraw from public affairs, but not to be engrossed by them, and to moderate every passion by the recollection that with me the end is at hand.

I have been much touched by the kindness of your letter. I may have forgotten, my beloved wife never forgot, our early friendship. She often spoke to me of you, and invariably in terms of kindness and commendation.

Of all the attempts to console Sir James Graham in his bereavement none showed more tender sympathy, or drew the correspondents closer together, than those of Mr. Gladstone.

It is with a trembling hand that I use my pen, nor would I do it did I not feel assured that you would understand my letter as a sign of deep and true condolence, not as an attempt to draw from you in words that which is beyond them.

Your friends have long seen you as if in the very last anxiety, and yet perhaps the protracted solicitude with all its preceding pains has taken nothing from the severity of the final stroke.

You have suffered that of which I can truly say it seems to me almost a profanation for any one to speak except those who by suffering it themselves have sadly earned their right to tell of its meaning, and to point out how it

may be met. In the late deep sorrow at Hagley no one could fail to mark the difference of the letters that came from that class of friends. They seemed like those who had gone through a fire that we had never been touched by, and who had entered into a new atmosphere of life.

I fear that, so far as suffering is concerned, the depth and tenderness of your domestic affections will make this great calamity even especially great to you. Your great capacity and ingrained love for the highest and most manly occupations will after a time render you, I trust, good service in preventing that self-devouring process which sometimes follows in the train of a heavy grief.

But it is not to this that you will look, or that any one whom you permit to call himself your friend will look for you now. You will seek your consolations from that source of which I have so often heard you speak in terms of the most devout and earnest feeling. As it has been ever in your mind when the pressure of need was not upon you, so now that the dark hour has come may it be opened abundantly to shed over you the waters of divine comfort and refreshment, and the gift which persuades even the most heavily bowed down among the children of men that it is good for them to be as they are, because God so wills it.

I have by me the letter in which you say, 'I often think with hope of those blessed words, "to be with Christ is far better" '; and many a time, I doubt not, since you so wrote has that thought stood you in good stead.

Be assured we all can feel for you, and do not think it too great a liberty if in this hour of sorrow, after all your goodness to me, I subscribe myself, for what remains of our lives, affectionately yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

To Mr. Gladstone

GROSVENOR PLACE, *November 2, 1857.*

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—

I can hardly muster up courage to write to you, yet silence in return to the affectionate kindness of your letter would be ingratitude.

I cannot as yet realise to myself the full extent of the

loss which I have sustained. I am stunned by the blow, and stagger under its weight.

I go to Netherby to-morrow, and hope by the blessing of God and by the means of tranquillity and rest to regain composure and calm submission to the divine will. . . .

I have seen mingled with the dust all that I valued most ; I have seen covered with thick clay the brightest vision which enchanted my youth, and which was the solace of my life.

I do endeavour, and will more earnestly endeavour, to turn from time to eternity. Without the hope beyond the grave I should be most miserable.

Ever your affectionate

J. R. G. GRAHAM.

From Mr. Gladstone

November 12.—Your letter gave me the most sincere and hearty pleasure, for nothing could more clearly show that you were prepared for the day of God's afflicting visitation with that which is the best and only preparation, and that you had not then to seek for your armour, but only to put it on.

We trust that your daughters have not suffered in health from this time of trial, but that their filial offices to you have been rewarded in consolation to themselves. Of the loss of a mother I can speak—it is a sharp severance, but it is mitigated by the sense that it comes in the order of nature as well as of Providence. Of the loss of a wife I do not trust myself either to speak or to think.

It was a loss which Mr. Gladstone was never called on to sustain.

As time went on, the mourner was gently drawn into touching again on subjects of political importance.

To Mr. Gladstone

NETHERBY, *November 23, 1857.*

I have written more on public affairs than I intended, but when once I begin to discuss with you I am as if I were conversing. I am always glad to hear from you.

From Mr. Gladstone

HAWARDEN, *November 24.*

I thank you for having relieved me from the pain of seeming to force these things upon your attention, by having yourself sent me so opportunely your view of public affairs.

I cannot do otherwise than applaud your intention to give yourself for some time the rest of home, though it is no longer cheered by the vision of one whom—to use an old and beautiful expression—you deeply loved ‘from the flower to the ripeness of the grape.’

Before, however, the meeting of Parliament I must, I think, ask you to let me come and have a conversation with you.

To Mr. Gladstone

November 25.—My crude opinions on the Banking and Currency questions are hardly worthy of your notice. My thoughts have been with my heart, and that is far away.

I have always thought that the Bank directors depart from their proper sphere when they consider the public interest instead of that of the proprietors. Let them attend to their own concerns, and let Parliament provide for the protection of the public. This, in 1797, was the language of Mr. Fox, who said : ‘This is the arrangement which suits better with their respective objects, and conduces best to their common ends ; instead of that union of duties in which everything is confounded.’ Lord Grenville also emphatically declared that ‘the ability of the Bank depends on its being kept distinct from the Government.’

These letters dimissory from the Treasury to the Bank proceed on the opposite principle. The state of the Bank is regarded as a joint-stock concern. The Directors discount for profit without control from the Treasury, and when they are on the verge of insolvency, either from imprudence or false notions of providing for the public good, the law is violated by a *coup d'état* in their favour, but at the expense of the fixed standard of value, on which the money's worth of all property depends.

Of the Principalities I have said nothing, because I hope to see you. My judgment inclines decidedly to union. I have no faith in 'the integrity of Turkey.' The Mahometan rule in Europe must soon come to an end.

A homogeneous Christian community of Roman origin commands all my sympathies, and will form, in my humble judgment, the germ of an Eastern Christian Empire, which may in time take the place of the Moslem in Europe.

From Mr. Gladstone

November 26.—Your letter gives me very useful matter, and I cordially agree in every word.

From Lord John Russell

December 13.—I am sorry to hear that you had been very unwell. I hope you will be able to recruit your forces for February.

India and Reform are two subjects well worthy of your efforts, and upon which you will easily qualify yourself for a leading part. None of the Ministry are equal to such subjects except Palmerston, and he for various reasons is ill fitted for new and vigorous thought.

On Reform there is little excitement, but a refusal of Reform, or a sham, would fan the flame. I do not think postponement would produce the same effect, and indeed I suspect that to be Bright's game, with a view to a more complete triumph of the democracy.

On no two subjects was Sir James Graham more exceptionally qualified to take a leading part than on India and on Reform. But he replied :

To Lord John Russell

December 16.—I have been very unwell for nearly a month, and am now recovering slowly. There is no elasticity in the rebound. Under the dead weight of a heavy heart and a load of years, I cannot look at the work of the next session with any energy or spirit.

You know my opinion of Palmerston. I recognise his merits, I acknowledge his abilities, but I have no faith in his principles, and his wayward propensities are most dangerous. As to Reform you and I know he cannot be sincere.

To Mr. Gladstone he wrote :

December 19.—I am thankful, and am recovering ; but it is a slow process when the spirit is broken.

I have had a long letter from Lord John Russell. He speaks disparagingly of the Government, and thinks them unequal to dealing with the Indian difficulties. He also foresees financial embarrassment, and asks how large naval and military establishments are to be upheld without increased taxation or permanent deficiency. He says also that Palmerston's physical strength is unimpaired, but that his mental vigour is decreasing.

I see no sign of this. All the defects of his character are prominently visible. But the House of Commons relies on him with unabated subserviency.

Lord John urges me to resume an active part ; but I have given scant encouragement to any such expectation. Palmerston will not be beaten without a struggle ; and like old Entellus I wish to say, 'hic caestus artemque repono.'

Lord John Russell about this time, owing to public apathy, seems to have grown less keen for Reform, and for displacing the Government.

December 21, 1857.—I hold it impossible to carry disfranchisement, against the Crown and the House of Lords, in the present temper of the people. With this opinion, and being quite unwilling to act with the advanced section of Reformers, I am not likely to oppose Palmerston's Bill—supposing it to be such as is reported—either on the second or third reading. In the Committee I shall be disposed to take my own line.

Such being my inclination, I shall always be ready to

consult you, but I wish to avoid 'entangling alliances' of any kind.

Any attempt to overthrow Palmerston on his sins of omission and commission in India, Persia, and China, would only strengthen his hold on the country, in my opinion, and I shall not join in any such attempt.

Sir James Graham wished only to maintain his independence.

NETHERBY, *December 23, 1857.*

Your relations with the Government are different from mine. All the members of the Cabinet have served under you, and most of them owe you everything. They consult you from time to time, and you give them your advice.

As to me, they remember only that I left them, and my services are forgotten. It is my wish to stand aloof from them. I neither enjoy nor seek their confidence. I am ready to judge their measures by their merits, knowing nothing of them until they are brought forward, anxious to give support if they be good, not hesitating to oppose if they appear to me to be mischievous.

You say that you 'wish to avoid entangling alliances.' The communications between you and me, in our present position, need not be regarded with any such apprehension. We are free lances, and we meet as old friends. The real entanglement is the confidential discussion of measures on the anvil of a Government, which they may be led to believe it is your intention to support, and which it may become your public duty to oppose.

This is the embarrassment which I always most dread, and which disinclines me to enter into the secrets of a Cabinet of which I am not a member, and to which I cannot promise invariable support.

Wesley, the founder of the Methodists, was a shrewd old fellow, and when he disclaimed all political friendships he is reported to have said, 'I know mankind too well. I know that they who love you for political service love you less than their dinners, and they who hate you hate you worse than the devil.' You are in possession of the

love of the present Ministers ; the other portion I am afraid is mine.

As to the new India Bill, the framework of the Governing Body in London is a small part of the real difficulty.

How will you deal with the Company's Army ? Is the Duke of Cambridge, with the Horse Guards as now constituted, to command and to reorganise the Indian Army ?

Are ways and means and supply for India to be voted to the Queen in the British House of Commons ?

How can the voice of India be heard there without representatives ?

I will not go on raising difficulties. They are immense and innumerable. Palmerston's supposed object in getting hold of the Indian Army is not wilder than the notion, if he indulge it, that he can extemporise a scheme of Indian government in present circumstances which shall pass through Parliament like a Turnpike Bill. Where Fox did not succeed, it is possible that Palmerston may fail.

From Lord John Russell

December 25, 1857.

I quite agree that much communication with the Ministers would be more embarrassing than any entangling alliance. But my communications with them are very rare, and never on the subject of general policy. It is true they now and then—very seldom—ask my opinions. But they do not communicate to me their intended measures, therefore I am not embarrassed by being committed beforehand, except by my own expressed opinions.

The Ministers love me according to Wesley's notion of political love ; your place in their affections I cannot tell.

To Lord John Russell

NETHERBY, December 27, 1857.

The future government of India is now the grand question.

The analogies of all other colonial possessions fail when applied to the administration of the affairs of that mighty

Empire—one hundred and fifty millions of subjects ; twenty-five millions of annual revenue ; one hundred millions of debt ; an army yesterday of three hundred thousand men, to-day dissolved, faithless, or in open mutiny. The great modern discovery of self-government and free institutions, whereby continents are still ruled as British dependencies, will not assist you here.

In India the British dominion must be absolute as well as supreme ; and the disconnection of the great body of the public servants there from the vicissitudes of party warfare here will be found essential to the permanent maintenance of steady counsels and commanding authority.

I have heard the Duke of Wellington say more than once, ‘ If you lose India, the House of Commons will lose it for you.’

The question of the future government of that noble prize appears to me the most difficult problem ever submitted to the decision of a deliberative Assembly. It was difficult in 1783, it is ten times more difficult now. Haste in deciding it would be unpardonable ; a great mistake would probably be irreparable. Every consideration therefore of policy and of public duty prescribes caution, and foregone conclusions are especially to be avoided.

January 9, 1858.—I have been prevented by severe illness from writing. I now gladly resume the pleasant occupation of adverting to some of the questions raised in your last letter.

If the whole of the Indian Army is to be henceforth the Queen’s Army, the Mutiny Act must be extended to the entire body, and questions of pay, allowances, relative rank, sale and purchase of first appointments and of subsequent promotion, all bearing on the existing system at the Horse Guards, will require immediate solution.

In the meantime we have succeeded in averting fearful disasters both at Delhi and at Lucknow, but we have had hairbreadth escapes. Time and concentration are necessary to extirpate this mutiny. We do not yet know how far its roots extend, or what may be the effects of the measures necessary for its suppression on the hearts and feelings of the native community.

I cannot bring myself to believe that this is the moment for an organic change in the ruling power of India. I could have wished that you were free to urge the policy of more calm consideration. I hope that you will not be precluded from taking this view.

Palmerston if pressed will give way. He will not, like Fox, risk political death for his India Bill.

I am as much opposed to running the risk of a Derby Government as you can be. But in checking the rashness of Palmerston I have no fear of overthrowing him. He will cling to office with a desperately retentive grasp, and will do anything or everything rather than resign.

From Lord John Russell

January 12.—I doubt whether the Government can hold together. Palmerston no doubt will be tenacious, but others will jump into a boat alongside to save themselves. They are not all seventy-three.

To Lord John Russell

January 13.—Your own present view exactly coincides with mine, but it is wide as the poles from Palmerston's, and, if you fail to give early effect to it so soon as the House meets, I fear you will be involved in both personal and party difficulties. Remember that this revolt is not yet quelled. Surely we have enough on our hands to require our undivided attention, without raising this question of double or single Government. Are we so well satisfied with the working of our triple Government at home that we must turn at once to this abstract question in India?

January 15.—I hesitate to adopt your conclusion, that in India the old machinery is worn out.

It has been recast and renovated from time to time, and so changed only five years ago that double Government is virtually at an end, and the President of the Board of Control is supreme. The Court of Directors operates as a moral check, and is in reality nothing more than a Council of Advice.

You admit the necessity of some such check, and of a Consultative Body. The question then is narrowed to

this—Does the urgency of the present crisis demand the substitution of some new and untried check for the old and accustomed Court ?

I have no faith in the Queen's name. I do not wish to make her an Empress. I think I can show that all the administrative reforms that are most necessary in India, as proved by recent experience, may be effected most safely and most easily by the existing machinery in England, and that if increase of summary power be wanting it should be added to the authorities in India, without the delay of constant references home. This argument would lead me too far for a letter.

Your President of the India Council would hold office during pleasure, but not being a member of the Cabinet he would in fact be—like the Chairman of the Board of Customs or of Inland Revenue—irremovable except for delinquency. This tenure virtually would be *quam diu [se bene gesserit]*.

Now observe. You provide for the case of dissent from the Council on the part of the President, who in concert with the Secretary of State may reverse their decision ; you do not provide for the union of the President and Council in opposition to the will and opinion of the Queen's Government. If, in this case, the Queen's Government is to be powerless, you have an *imperium in imperio*, practically dangerous, and theoretically indefensible. If [on the other hand] the President and Council though unanimous be subject to the absolute will of the Executive, their nominal power becomes a delusion, and the new semblance of a moral check will not be one whit better than the old.

Your proposed mode of proceeding by resolutions is much better than by Bill.

From Lord John Russell

January 16, 1858.

The present state of things requires the most mature reflection. I cannot be insensible to the dangers which Palmerston's levity and presumption may bring upon us. But on the other hand it is desirable not to give any colour to the charge, which he preferred so groundlessly

but so successfully last year, of factious combination against him.

Melbourne always had the greatest dread of Palmerston's obtaining an increase of influence in the Government, and he positively refused to go on unless I would remain a member of his Cabinet. I believe he was justified in his fears.

I think my independent President of the Council for India would do very well. I think you, or Baring, or Lord Stanley would govern well in that high trust.

To Lord John Russell

NETHERBY, *January 17, 1858.*

I will not dwell on the character of Palmerston. You know my opinion of him as First Minister. I think him dangerous, and I have always understood that Melbourne, who knew him best, dreaded him most. But I have endeavoured to look at this Indian question apart from all personal considerations.

I have crept into my shell, and would gladly remain there. I have no desire to take a part in this impending conflict, and am content to abide the issue. My confidence in my own judgment lessens as I grow old.

However, if the force of circumstances overpower my inclination, if I must mingle in the fray, and if I have any knowledge whatever of my own motives, I never was more simply desirous to pursue the narrow path of public duty, and to consult the public interests alone.

I have abstained from all communications on the subject of India except with Lord Aberdeen and you. Lord Aberdeen is my familiar friend, with whom I have no reserve; and to you old habits of intimacy happily now resumed, and my deep conviction of your power at this juncture to achieve a great public service, have led me to open my whole mind and to state all my hopes and fears.

A great object will be gained if the Government can be brought to open their scheme in the shape of resolutions, not of a Bill.

I do not know how you propose to keep the Cabinet constantly informed of the decisions and policy of the President and Council of India. After all, in the last

resort, the controlling authority and the parliamentary responsibility must rest with the First Minister of the Crown and his Cabinet Council, and will be inoperative if it be not the constant duty of some member of the Cabinet day by day to superintend and to control the proceedings of the Council of India.

But here I will stop, and will controvert no more.

From Lord John Russell

January 23.—I am not disposed to insist that the Indian Minister should not be a member of the Cabinet. The only three persons to whom (besides Vernon Smith) I have made this suggestion—Lord Aberdeen, Lord Minto, and you—have all disapproved.

From Mr. Gladstone

HAWARDEN, *January 23, 1858.*

There are many subjects of pressing importance on which I greatly desire to compare notes with you.

India first and foremost. Do you adhere to the idea that the time is unfit? If a measure is introduced, ought we not at least steadily and vigorously to resist all attempts at creating a monster patronage, military or civil? and ought we not also to stand for the creation of a real check upon the Indian Minister?

To Lord John Russell

January 24, 1858.

The petition of the Directors is for the postponement of legislative change during the continuance of the revolt, and for a full previous inquiry into the operation of the present system. This petition is drawn with great ability,¹ and rests on sound reasoning. It cannot fail to make an impression on the public mind. No one has as yet preferred charges against the Directors. It was by Lord Aberdeen's Cabinet that the present amended scheme of Indian government was framed; and when the Bill for overthrowing it is produced, the onus of proof will rest with its authors that the necessity of immediate change is urgent, and that it arises from misrule.

What will be the effect at this moment of any such

¹ By John Stuart Mill.

declaration, express or implied, on the part of Ministers of the Crown? Will it make the suppression of the revolt more certain or easy? How is the motion for previous inquiry to be resisted?

From the tone of the Government papers I infer that Palmerston will rush headlong in the first instance, and lay a Bill on the table. If this be so, it is fruitless to discuss your plan at present. Resolutions are far preferable to a Bill.

To Mr. Gladstone

NETHERBY, *January 26, 1858.*

I have been very unwell ever since I came here; at one time I thought seriously, but I am by God's blessing now recovering, and hope to do well.

I have no fancy for making my appearance in the House of Commons on an early day. My heart sinks within me when I think of a return to the strife of political warfare. Yet I suppose that I must return.

The prospect is by no means alluring. The state of parties is odious. I have no faith in Palmerston; I think him a very dangerous Minister. But the Liberal party is bought and sold to him, and the delusion in his favour in the country has not yet passed away. Derby and his crew cannot man the ship, and the waves are about to run high. Disraeli at the helm in the Commons would swamp the vessel in calm weather.

From Mr. Gladstone

January 30, 1858.

I quite agree with what you say on the state of parties. I know not which of the two is in the more lamentable condition. It is plainly for us to remain quiet and in the shade.

From Lord John Russell

January 28.—The aversion to legislate this year increases. Ministers are a good deal embarrassed; independent men think their conduct reckless and hasty. It is clear the Company, encouraged by the state of opinion, are ready to declare open war.

I must own the recent advices from India make me quite willing to see the session 1858 devoted to inquiry, and 1859 to legislation. I confess, the more I know, the more difficulties I perceive.

To Lord John Russell

January 31.—I am sincerely obliged by your kindness in writing to me so frequently. I am afraid that I must have wearied you by urging so pertinaciously my individual sentiments. It may, however, not be amiss that you should know them ; their weight will be duly estimated by your better judgment.

I cannot foresee what will happen amidst this confusion of parties, and conflict of opinion even among friends.

Sir James Graham's letters about this time both to Lord John Russell and to Mr. Gladstone were mostly seen by Lord Aberdeen, and usually received his warm approval.

CHAPTER XV

1858

Conspiracy to Murder Bill—Defeat of Palmerston—Second Administration of Lord Derby—Conservative India Bill—Ellenborough censures Canning—Resigns—Disraeli's offers to Graham, and to Gladstone—Indian Affairs—Letters on Competitive Examination to Prince Albert.

‘**I** CANNOT foresee what will happen.’ Even while Graham wrote this, in January, 1858, the unforeseen event had happened that caused Palmerston's fall.

Italians had conspired in London to murder their former comrade in the ‘Carbonari,’ Louis Napoleon. The Emperor narrowly escaped death. France was furious. Their Minister represented that if British law was strong enough to restrain crime it should be enforced, otherwise it should be amended.

Such remonstrance hardly could be blamed. But the French army held different language. Some of their addresses to their Emperor on his escape were couched in blustering terms offensive to Great Britain. One such manifesto urged him to ‘demand an account from the land of iniquity which contains the monsters sheltered by its laws.’ Another ran, ‘Let the infamous haunts in which machinations so infernal are planned be destroyed for ever.’ And these ravings were selected for publication in the *Moniteur*.

The Emperor apologised for this as inadvertence. But

the mischief had been done. British public opinion was inflamed. The temper of the nation rose against meek amendment of English law, unaccompanied by any spirited vindication of national independence; and, as on the Corn Laws and on Papal Aggression, Lord John Russell rushed to the front to lead a popular movement, and made haste to enlist Graham as an ally.

Sir James was as little inclined as Lord John to legislation in deference to foreign menace, but deprecated hasty action.

NETHERBY, *February 4, 1858.*

I revolt at the idea of altering the law of England in obedience to the dictation of France, and under threats from the prætorian guard of a usurper. The changes of law now in progress at Paris are a pretty specimen of the alterations which are best adapted to the tyrant's taste. He thinks, and his army thinks, that they can take us at a disadvantage, and bully with safety, while our distracted force is occupied at the other end of the world. But John Bull is a strange animal. If you goad him, his courage rises, and tame submission to France is contrary to his very nature.

The Government measure as you represent it is comparatively harmless, but just in proportion as it is insignificant it is ignominious in present circumstances. It might have been yielded to friendly negotiation; it cannot without loss of honour be conceded to the menaces of the French army, published under official sanction. All Europe would laugh at our degradation. I agree with you therefore in your desire to resist the proposal of the Government.

But I do not think that it would be wise to oppose the introduction of the Bill. You may well protest in the strongest manner, and thereby fix public attention on the grave matter to be decided. But the great object is to obtain a sufficient interval between the first and second reading for a full expression of the public feeling, which will, I am certain, be most hostile to the proceeding.

On the same subject Sir James had written to Mr. Gladstone.

NETHERBY, *February 3, 1858.*

I am alarmed by rumours which reach me of a large addition to the army in England, and also to the navy. Our relations with France will be urged as rendering this precaution necessary; and I fear that she is not indisposed to fasten on us a quarrel, unless we alter our criminal law under her dictation to an extent quite inconsistent with our freedom and national honour.

The whole aspect of affairs is alarming. We have at home a minister in whom I have no confidence, but who still commands popular favour, and in France we have at the head of that restless nation a most ambitious, false, and daring tyrant, in whose professions no reliance can be placed, and whose intentions are always worse than his threats.

The correspondence was continued :

From Mr. Gladstone

HAWARDEN, *February 6, 1858.*

If the Government make out a good case on the merits, the question becomes a difficult one whether to amend the law. But that is a great if.

In the first place it is strange to amend the law before it has been tried and found wanting. It will be still more strange to amend it in a way having no natural tendency to make it more efficient for prevention.

If the argument they make amounts only to this—‘it will do no harm’—then I think by passing it under fire from the army and the Ministers they will do the greatest harm.

To Mr. Gladstone

NETHERBY, *February 9, 1858.*

Since Lord John wrote to me the letter which you saw I have heard twice from him. At first he yielded assent to my suggestion, and declared his intention of not dividing against the first reading of the Conspiracy Bill. Last

night I received a note from him announcing a change of purpose, and the determination to divide. It is not easy to act on the spot with one who changes so often and so suddenly ; it is quite impossible at a distance.

Graham's advice was justified by the result. Leave to bring in the Bill was given by a majority of two hundred, and Sir James wrote to Lord John, ' Nothing could be better than your speech, nothing worse than the division.'

At the same time the confused relations of parties were further complicated by a move of the East India Company to delay the proposed transfer of all their remaining powers of government to the Crown. Letters exchanged on this subject record Mr. Gladstone's profound distrust of Lord Palmerston, little more than a year before for the third time he took office with him.

From Mr. Gladstone

Private.

HAWARDEN, *February* 14, 1858.

I am sorry to hear that Lord John is to vote against Baring. If Baring's motion be right, surely the grounds on which it rests are of commanding force.

I am deeply convinced of the expediency of altering the Indian Government, but, partly by your reasoning, and partly by my own, I have come to the conclusion that it would be dangerous to make such an attempt at this moment ; and having come to that conclusion, I cannot see my way to do otherwise than vote in conformity with it.

Believing Lord Palmerston to be by far the worst Minister the country has had during our time—a belief which I hold in common with you—I am not impelled or tempted to set aside great public pleas in order to keep him in office.

In the Indian division leave was given by a large majority to bring in the Bill. But on the Conspiracy Bill

public opinion, with time to gather, as Graham had foreseen, ran strong against the Government, and on the second reading of the Bill it was thrown out.

Thus in his turn, Lord John 'had his tit-for-tat.' Twice in twelve months censured on his foreign policy, this time Palmerston resigned, and again the reins were made over to Derby.

In constructing a Cabinet, Lord Derby's first act was to invite the aid of Mr. Gladstone, who, however, after consulting Graham and other friends, declined. The reason he gave was that 'alone, as he must be, he could not render service worth having.' Therefore he would not become a member of the Ministry, but 'they would have strong claims on him for favourable presumptions and . . . for support.'

Throughout this second Administration of Lord Derby Graham held a position of commanding influence, and used it purely for the public welfare. In the interests of peace he wished not to see Palmerston again supreme. He preferred Russell, but feared lest rivalry between the two should injure public interests.

To himself it was still offered to become Conservative leader of the House of Commons. But his former colleague, Lord Derby, had fallen back so far from their early Liberal principles that Graham could not give him general support. Yet for the present he inclined to keep the Conservatives—as Peel and he had kept the Whigs—in office, rather than risk unnecessary war by letting in Palmerston, or cause confusion by overthrowing one Government before another was ready to take its place.

To Lord John, in answer to inquiries, he wrote frankly :

March 2.—To the best of my knowledge and belief

the Peelites have given no assurance to Lord Derby that they will not co-operate with you.

None of them have had any communication with Lord Derby, excepting Gladstone; and his written refusal to accept Lord Derby's offer contained no mention of you. The promise of support on his part was strictly limited to measures, so long as his conscientious conviction would enable him to give it, and this promise so expressed was approved by Lord Aberdeen and Sidney Herbert.

The assurance from me to you is superfluous, that I am bound by no engagement whatever inconsistent with the friendly feelings towards you which I openly avow.

To Lord Aberdeen he was still more communicative :

March 31.—I am anxious not to restore Palmerston to power, and I am most reluctant to give any vote which is likely to produce that effect. Lord John best knows how he stands with the Whigs, and what are his own prospects. He will not, I think, act prudently if he at once displace Lord Derby to make room for Palmerston.

If we do not take care, all government will be rendered impossible, and hopeless confusion must result at a critical juncture in public affairs.

We shall be charged, as usual, with 'putting ourselves up and buying ourselves in.'¹ But I still wish to act in conformity with your advice and opinion, giving every advantage to Lord John which his position will allow.

The truth is that no good can be done while he and Palmerston sit in the same House. It is doubtful whether they could agree sitting in different Houses; it is impossible while they both remain in the House of Commons.

On India Sir James continued to correspond with Mr. Gladstone and with Lord John Russell.

From Mr. Gladstone

April 23, 1858.

I had a very long conversation with Bright this evening on India. He is as keen and decided as you or I can

¹ A saying attributed to Lady Clanricarde.

be in the opinion that no India Bill should pass which does not limit the dangerous and much misused discretion of the Ministers of the Crown in the use of the army of India.

He admits the difficulty of governing a people by a people, *i.e.* India by a pure Parliamentary Government.

To Lord John Russell

April 25, 1858.

It is clear that a new scheme for the home government of India, if indeed it be necessary, cannot be framed by the effort of individual members. Nothing but the authority of a First Minister and the cohesion of office can reconcile differences and amalgamate conflicting opinions.

I am sorry therefore that in your present position you bind yourself to a plan, and tender a measure. Instead of an umpire you will become a party in the suit; and though party objects are universally disclaimed, yet in reality it is a struggle for power.

If you materially alter the present form of Indian home government, I see no alternatives but a Secretary of State with tools, or a President of Council in leading strings. You seek to steer a middle course between the two. I can discover no opening in that direction. Surely in present circumstances it is not prudent unnecessarily to show your hand and to lay your cards on the table. Excuse this frankness.

To the Liberal Whip, his old friend, Ellice, he wrote in plain terms :

April 5.—I am not prepared to place Palmerston at the head of affairs, and, unless he and Lord John can come to some agreement, Derby for the present must be regarded as the least of two evils.

There are two solutions of the difficulty.

First, Johnny—with an earldom adequately endowed by the Duke of Bedford—First Minister, with Palmerston not at the Foreign Office, but leader in the Commons. Second, Johnny First Minister, remaining in the Commons,

Palmerston an earl, President of the Council, leader in the Lords.

One or other of these arrangements would release us from the deadlock. Nothing else will be effectual. We shall do no good while the two Kings of Brentford sit in the same House, and Lord John cannot be expected to serve again under Palmerston.

I told Lord John distinctly what was my view of the dilemma, and of the escape from it.

Lord Ellenborough's India Bill did not prosper. It differed from Lord Palmerston's chiefly in vesting the election of some members of the Council in large parliamentary constituencies—London, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, and Belfast. This Tory tribute to democracy found no favour, and the Bill was abandoned for Graham's course of proceeding by resolutions.

Meanwhile the Governor-General had shocked public opinion by ordering a sweeping confiscation in Oude of proprietary rights in land save those of a few individuals who during the mutiny had sided with the British. Ellenborough, at the Board of Control, promptly wrote and also published a despatch severely blaming Canning for the proclamation, and charging him to mitigate it in practice. Against thus impairing at a critical moment the chief authority in India, Cardwell, as a friend of Canning, moved a vote of censure.

To this proceeding Graham, unwilling to overthrow the new Administration, lent no aid. Indeed, so friendly was his attitude at this time towards the Government that Mr. Disraeli made bold to renew his overtures of 1850, and, when these failed, still to solicit the influence of Sir James in Parliament to make it clear that Lord Derby, if beaten, would not resign, but had power to dissolve.

The letters that remain are these :

From Mr. Disraeli

Confidential.

GROSVENOR GATE, *May* 16, 1858.

Would you permit me to call on you, and to converse with you on a subject of grave and urgent interest ? I do not write this to you as a Minister, but merely as an individual to whom in early days of parliamentary life you were very kind, and by whom that kindness has never been forgotten.

Confidential.

May 17.—In communicating with your friend, I would venture to observe that I should wish the name of an illustrious personage not to be used. What I told you was the literal truth, but I ought to have added that the name with respect to the subject should not be mentioned.

Your great experience and discretion render this intimation on my part, I doubt not, unnecessary, but I thought it due to myself to make it. What might be said is, that Lord Derby has not the slightest doubt of his power of dissolving.

May 18.—The division, I apprehend, will be close and, I am assured, is still doubtful. The question of dissolution would decide the result. It is impossible for any of us to intimate it ; but—if indeed I might presume to make such a suggestion—were a personage of your great authority, in the course of the debate, to announce that it would be scarcely possible, if the Government were defeated, not to appeal to the country, the effect might be conclusive.

While opposing the vote of censure, Graham thought it necessary in debate (*May* 20) to make it quite clear that he had no intention of joining Lord Derby.

I wish to state [he said] that it is by the courtesy of honourable gentlemen that I occupy a seat on this side of the House, though I am no adherent of Her Majesty's Government. By no engagement, express or implied,

am I their supporter. On the contrary, my sympathies and opinions are with the Liberal party, and from recent kind communications I have resumed those habits of kindly intercourse and confidential communication with my noble friend [Lord John Russell] which formerly existed between us.

At the same time he expressed an opinion that Canning's proclamation was substantially wrong, and Ellenborough's despatch substantially right. 'What I most reprehend,' he added, 'namely, the publication, I hold to be atoned for by the resignation of Lord Ellenborough.'

For the publication other Ministers, besides Ellenborough, were responsible. Disraeli, in answer to a question, had startled the House of Commons by revealing that a despatch had been sent to the Governor-General 'disapproving the policy which he indicated in every sense'; and Lord Derby in the Upper House had described what had been written as 'censure and condemnation.' But after Graham's speech there was a growing unwillingness to drive the conflict to extremity. It was understood that the Government would 'mitigate' not only Canning's policy towards the landowners, but also their own rebuke to Canning, and by general consent the motion was withdrawn, Ellenborough having resigned.

The vacancy thus created in the Cabinet was promptly offered to Mr. Gladstone, and this led to an important correspondence between him and Graham.

From Mr. Gladstone

11, CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, May 23, 1858.

The enclosed memorandum will, I hope, fully explain itself. Lord Aberdeen agrees with me that I could not do otherwise than say no. I daresay you will give me your frank opinion, together with your directions for using it.

The question may still remain how far it is fair to Lord Derby to send him again simply an answer turning on the point of sole action ; as it might seem to convey a feeling on my part that he ought to, or might, attempt something more extended. On that question, however, I have no authority to speak for others, and I fear I could give him little light and still less hope.

The enclosure may be read in full in the *Life of Mr. Gladstone*. Short extracts here will suffice to show its nature.

Walpole stated that he came by authority of Lord Derby to offer me the Board of Control or, if I preferred it, the Colonial Office. He explained that Mr. Disraeli had stated his willingness to surrender the leadership to Sir James Graham, if he were disposed to join the Government ; but that the expressions he had used in his speech (May 20) seemed to put it beyond the right of the Government to make any proposal to him. He at the same time spoke in the highest terms not only of the speech, but of the position in which he thought it placed Sir James Graham ; and he left me to infer that there would have been, but for the cause named, a desire to obtain his co-operation as leader of the House of Commons.

I expressed much regret that accidental causes had kept back from my view at a critical moment the real extent of Lord Derby's proposals in February ; that I answered him then with respect to myself individually . . . that I could not separate from those with whom I had been acting all my life long, to go into what might justly be called a Cabinet of strangers. I felt that my individual junction would and could draw no material accession of strength to the Cabinet.

He made the marked admission that if my acceptance must be without the *approval* of friends, that must undoubtedly be an element of great weight in the case. This showed clearly that Lord Derby was looking to me in the first place, and then to others beyond me.

When read together with this memorandum, the

covering letter to Sir James Graham plainly asked advice not for Mr. Gladstone's own guidance alone, but also as to any prospect of support from Peelite friends. Sir James therefore answered on this point with his usual candour.

Private.

NETHERBY, *May 25, 1858.*

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

The offer of the India Board at this juncture is a tempting one, and the moment chosen is opportune. The difficulties opposed to your acceptance are separation from your friends and the question of the lead in the House of Commons.

As to your friends, the little band is broken up. The Duke of Newcastle studiously stands aloof, awaiting the chance which may place him at the head of affairs. Cardwell must henceforth be regarded as Palmerston's retainer. Herbert also has taken his decision, and will act with the Whigs, in opposition to Lord Derby's Government; feelings and influences which it is vain to counter-act lead him irresistibly in that direction. The struggle has made him unhappy, and it must now be considered as an established fact that his part is taken.

Lord Aberdeen is the common friend to whom we all resort when we want comfort and advice. His kindness and his truth never fail to present to us what is worthy of our consideration in our respective positions. If not our leader, he is our most faithful friend, and while he lives his opinion is a shining light by which to steer. He must be regarded, however, more as a bystander than as a confederate.

At a long distance my position is the same as Lord Aberdeen's. I purposely made the recent declaration to which Walpole referred. I wished it to be distinctly understood that any support which I give to Lord Derby is in spite of my strong Liberal prepossessions; that I have ceased to have any personal or party objects; and that I desire to wean myself from worldly affairs.

I have now exhausted the catalogue of your most intimate political friends, and the result is that you stand

alone. I think that fixed party ties and active official duties would conduce to your present happiness and future fame.

An intimate connection with Lord Derby is an alliance which in present circumstances you might form with perfect honour. Your natural affinities are strong. Your united powers would give unusual lustre to the Conservative party, and your honest Liberal tendencies would soon leaven the whole lump and bring it more into conformity with the shape and body of the times. I think that this union would be for the public good in the long-run, although it might not avert the early overthrow of this Administration, and although it would seal the separation between you and the friends whom I have enumerated.

You are painfully alive to the inconvenience and evils of your present position. You say¹ that you are 'at the bottom of a well, waiting for a ladder to be put down to you.' Derby tenders this ladder. The Board of Control is not a bad one, though Ellenborough has just tumbled from it and broken his neck. The labours of that high office would engross you, but not overpower you, and with the blessing of Providence you might be enabled to render to the State pre-eminent service at a moment of great danger.

It remains to consider the question of leadership in the Commons. I once thought, and strongly expressed the opinion, that you could not without humiliation and dishonour accept a seat on the Treasury Bench with D'Israeli for your leader. I am bound to say that subsequent events have qualified this opinion. As matters stand you cannot make it a condition precedent that he shall abdicate. But side by side you would soon virtually supersede him. He is not well qualified for the duties of the post, and will be found ready to relinquish it whenever he can do so without disgrace. The transfer which he has contemplated with respect to me is a proof of this feeling on his part.

I could not listen for one moment to his proposal to me, however generous and flattering. Without the

¹ In the memorandum. See Morley's *Gladstone*, i. 383.

proposal and without any stipulation, if you join the Government, the concession will somehow be made, and I feel certain that in the Commons pre-eminence will be yours, let the official arrangements be what they may.

One word as to the prospects of the Administration and as to probable events. I cannot consider this Government as stable, and I am doubtful whether your accession would add materially to their present strength.

A dissolution of Parliament cannot be far distant, and the result of that dissolution must depend on circumstances which we cannot foresee. But it will enable the Government either to go on or to retire at the head of a most powerful party; and with Derby in the Lords and you in the Commons acting in concert, the prospects of the Conservative party cannot be dreary. Parliamentary Reform will be a prominent question, and on this subject you are more likely to agree with Lord Derby than with Lord John Russell.

I have now opened to you my mind, as a faithful friend, without reserve. You must decide for yourself; in conformity with your sense of public duty, but not casting aside all thought of your private feelings and personal interests. Time is wearing fast away. You have attained the utmost vigour of your understanding and of your powers. Present opportunities are not to be neglected in the vain expectation of better, which may arise, but may also never come. Without some risk no great advantage is ever gained.

You will perceive that my judgment is on this occasion balanced, like your own.

I should rejoice to see your honest virtue and your great abilities actively employed in the public service, not wasted in fruitless controversy. Your acceptance of office would estrange you from me, and might even place us more or less in collision of action, but not of feeling.

You cannot forget—I can never forget—the struggles which we have made together, and come what may we can never cease to be friends while I linger here. I am always,

Your sincere and affectionate
J. R. G. GRAHAM.

‘An admirable letter,’ writes Mr. Morley, ‘truly worthy of a wise, affectionate, and faithful friend.’¹ Yet the advice was not quite to Mr. Gladstone’s mind. He yearned to accept Lord Derby’s offer ; but not without more definite approval than he could obtain from any Peelites. Their tendencies were Liberal, his were Conservative ; they also shrank more than he did from union in office with the men who had worked hard in 1846 to defeat Peel’s policy, and failing that to wreak revenge on Peel.

Moreover on the very day (May 25) when Graham despatched this letter Disraeli also had written to inform Gladstone as to the offer he had made in 1850, and again quite recently, to Graham. The expressions used are for Graham’s life so important that leave has been obtained to quote here a part of Mr. Disraeli’s communication. He wrote :

In 1850, when the balanced state of parties in the House of Commons indicated the future, I endeavoured, through the medium of the late Lord Londonderry, and for some time not without hope, to induce Sir James Graham to accept the post of leader of the Conservative party, which I hoped would remove all difficulties.

When he finally declined this offer, I endeavoured to throw the game into your hands, and your conduct then, however unintentionally, assisted me in my views. The precipitate Ministry of 1852 baffled all this. Could we have postponed it another year, all might have been right.

Some short time back, when the power of dissolution was certain, and the consequences of it such as, in my opinion, would be highly favourable to the Conservative party, I again confidentially sought Sir James Graham, and implored him to avail himself of the favourable conjuncture, accept the post of leader in the House of Commons, and allow both of us to serve under him.

¹ Morley’s *Gladstone*, i. 586.

He was more than kind to me, and fully entered into the state of affairs ; but he told me that his course was run, and that he had not strength or spirit for such an enterprise.

Sir James Graham has left no record of this conversation, but the date of it must have been after the death of Lady Graham, and probably is indicated by Mr. Disraeli's letter to him of May 16. It will be seen that the terms proposed on May 25 by Disraeli to Gladstone agree exactly with Graham's intimation. 'You cannot make it,' writes Graham, 'a condition precedent that he shall abdicate, but side by side you would soon virtually supersede him.' 'Whatever office you filled,' writes Disraeli on the same day, 'your shining qualities would always render you supreme, and, if party necessities retain me in the chief post, the unbounded confidence which on my part you could command would prevent your feeling my position as anything but a form.'

With so flattering an assurance from the leader of the Commons, Mr. Gladstone kept the question open by a courteous answer that 'he was awaiting counsel which by Lord Derby's wish he had sought'; and his reply to Graham shows some reluctance to abandon all hope of realising at this time his cherished ideal—'a liberal policy worked with greater security to the country through the medium of the Conservative party.'¹

From Mr. Gladstone

May 26, 1858.

I cannot sufficiently thank you for writing to me so promptly, efficiently, and fully. I carried your letter to Lord Aberdeen, upon whom it had the effect of bringing him pretty nearly to your point of view.

¹ Morley's *Gladstone*, i. 418.

But after all from that point of view the question appeared to you a doubtful one; and although you appeared to lean in favour of my acceptance, yet the counsel was indecisive. . . .

Your affirmative advice, had it even been more positive, was not approval, nor was Lord Aberdeen's. On the contrary it would have been like the orders to Balaam that he should go with the messengers of Balak, when, notwithstanding the command, the act was recorded against him.

There are two conditions either of which would have justified, and even required, the acceptance of Lord Derby's offer—one of them, predominating political sympathies with his party; the other, the hope of being able so to use that party as by its means to work greater public good.

As to the first, I have no such predominating sympathies. I have for a long time been in the odd position of one who thinks well of both parties!

As respects the second condition, it is on the whole my opinion that if Lord Derby could rally the old materials which were at Peel's command, it would so far promise public good that the plan would deserve to be considered. But I have no power either to make Lord Derby propose, or to induce others under any circumstances to consider his proposal.

The question goes back therefore to myself individually; and upon that question, so restricted, I cannot entertain a serious doubt. At the bottom of the well I must remain, so long as it shall please Providence to leave me without the means of safely—that is, honourably and usefully—emerging into daylight and the upper air.

I wrote to Lord Derby briefly in the sense of my answer to Walpole. He is gone to Osborne. . . .

I do not know whether he will say anything to the Queen of more comprehensive proceedings.

This last remark compelled Graham again to point out plainly the futility, in his view, of hoping that Lord Derby could 'rally the old materials which were at Peel's command.'

*To Mr. Gladstone**Private.*NETHERBY, *May 27, 1858.*

I could not honestly have given you a more positive opinion than that contained in my last letter.

I endeavoured to divest myself of all selfish feelings and considerations, and to regard the question exclusively as affecting your present position and your future interests. It was right to set before you all that occurred to me, but beyond that mark I could not go. The decision involved too deeply your future happiness and prospects to be taken by any one but yourself. I hope and trust that you have decided rightly; my judgment inclined the other way.

I should be sorry if your letter to Lord Derby led him to make any more extended proposal. It could not possibly succeed, as matters now stand, and the abortive attempt would be injurious to him.

The reconstruction of the fossil remains of the old Peel party is a hopeless task. No human power can now reanimate it with the breath of life; it is decomposed into atoms, and will be remembered only as a happy accident while it lasted.

The same view of the situation is developed more fully in a letter from Graham to Lord Aberdeen.

May 28.—I am glad that you approve of my letter to Gladstone. It was written in all sincerity, and with an earnest desire to lead him to the decision which might be most in accordance with his real interests and private feelings.

I had no doubt whatever that acceptance was compatible with his honour, and I inclined to the belief that his private judgment and wishes gravitated towards Lord Derby. It was impossible, in a matter so peculiarly his own, to take the responsibility of positive advice; but I meant to make it clear to him that, with an intimate knowledge of his character and position, I was disposed to counsel acceptance.

By a letter received from him yesterday I find that

he has decided otherwise; but some expressions in his letter led me to fear that he hoped Lord Derby might be induced to make a wider proposal, including some of his friends.

I answered this letter on the spot, telling him that any such attempt was quite hopeless, and that I trusted Lord Derby would not be misled into making it, for it would be abortive, and therefore injurious to Lord Derby and his friends.

The truth is that Gladstone wishes to join, and to carry with him Herbert and his own most intimate friends. He forgets that he is master of his own decision, but cannot rule theirs. They are, one and all, as much determined not to join as he is anxious to lead them in that direction; and he mistakes his influence over them when he believes that he can overcome their fixed inclination.

It is a great happiness to me to have acted in this matter without concert with you, but in strict accordance with your judgment and with your own line of conduct.

You will be sorry to hear that I am not well, and that gout is hanging about me.

‘Veniunt morbi, tristisque senectus.’

I will not add the end¹ of this melancholy verse.

Ever your most affectionate

J. R. G. GRAHAM.

Throughout this year, in spite of broken health, Sir James Graham continued stoutly to discharge all parliamentary duties. In June and July he took active and useful part in framing first the resolutions, and then the Bill founded on them, for the future government of India by direct authority of the Crown.

One question on which he felt anxious was as to the possibly corrupting effect of the vast amount of patronage to be taken over. On this point he conferred with Mr. Gladstone, and wrote also to Prince Albert, who had consulted him, a full explanation and defence of the

¹ ‘Et duræ rapit inclementia mortis.’—Virgil, *Georg.* iii. 68.

policy of awarding junior appointments by competitive examination. It will be seen how diligently, in the absence of others, he attended in his place to prevent mutilation of the measure by weak assent to amendments made by the House of Lords.

To Mr. Gladstone

Private.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *July 27, 1858.*

We have discussed the Lords' amendments to the India Bill. The Government have yielded on two points of importance, and have annulled the amendments which deprived the majority present of the Council of their vote in matters of patronage.

I attached real importance to the question at issue ; for this controlling power, together with the command of the purse, constitutes the whole difference between a sham and a substantive check.

Stanley and the Government behaved well, and yielded with a good grace to reason.

To your clause the Lords have added the exception of 'preventing' to 'repelling' invasion. This addition nullifies and even stultifies your precaution, for every aggressive Indian war has been waged under the pretext of 'preventing' invasion.

Lord John will concur with me in an effort to reject this amendment. I have spoken to Stanley, and I do not think that he will offer any firm resistance.

July 28.—I did my best to prevent your clause being nullified, but in vain. Lord John deserted, and all the soldiers in the House declared in favour of aggression as the best mode of 'preventing' invasion.

Still the clause stands, like that of Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, a lasting memorial of the mind of its framer and of the spirit of the Legislature which adopted it.

We were more fortunate in defending the principle and practice of competitive examination. We beat the Government, and restored the statutory recognition of the principle which the Lords had repudiated. Stanley declared that he was ready to resign rather than renounce it.

From Mr. Gladstone

HAWARDEN, July 30, 1858.

Thanks for your generous struggle in the matter of my clause. The change is a thoroughly bad and foolish one, but I hope and think the clause will still afford a standing-ground from which a control may be exercised upon future Palmerstons.

To Lord John Russell

Private.

GROSVENOR PLACE, July 29, 1858.

Our vote in favour of a title to Crown patronage created by success in competitive examinations is regarded at Osborne with high displeasure. It is considered a direct invasion of prerogative, and a step in advance towards a parliamentary army.

I have just returned from the Lords, where Lord Derby, *multa gemens*, has consented to the Commons amendments to the India Bill as returned by us, with the exception of the restored regulation which provides that candidates for cadetships in the Engineers and Artillery shall be recommended in the order of their proficiency in open trial examinations. This enactment is to be resisted, and the Commons will be urged not to insist on their amendment. Lord Stanley, I believe, adheres to his opinion in favour of the enactment, but the pressure from Osborne has rendered resistance necessary. The question is a delicate one. I hope you will be present. Palmerston I think will concur with the Lords.

Some distinction may be drawn between civil and military appointments, but it never was intended to vest absolutely in the Crown any portion of the Indian patronage. Any concession at this moment and in this direction, after our vote on Tuesday last, will be most unpopular. The adherence to that vote with respect to the military service will be resented by the Court as a measure of direct hostility. This will be indeed a test of our chivalry.

Next day Sir James had the courage to address the Court directly on the subject, in a letter which for tact

and dignity, combined with knowledge of the subject, can hardly be surpassed.

To H.R.H. Prince Albert

GROSVENOR PLACE, *July 30, 1858.*

I am grieved that your Royal Highness should apprehend danger from the limits imposed by Parliament on the transfer to the Crown of the patronage of India.

This difficulty respecting patronage has stood in the way of the transfer for the last half century, and it was one of the reasons which made me desirous to postpone the projected change at this critical juncture. But Her Majesty's servants were resolved that India should be governed in the name of the Queen.

The ordinary consequence would have been that the whole civil and military patronage should have followed the transfer, and that henceforth the Crown nominally, but really the Queen's Ministers, should be placed in exclusive possession of a boundless influence, from which heretofore they had been shut out with the utmost caution.

Popular feelings and popular interests were alike opposed to any such transition. It never could have been effected with the consent of the House of Commons.

In the new distribution of this patronage the Crown has gained much. The Governor-General, the Governors of the Presidencies, the Advocate-General, the fourth member of the Council of India, are now to be appointed by warrant under sign manual. Heretofore they were appointed by the Court of Directors, in the case of the Governor-General the Crown having only a veto.

The Home Government of India will be exercised in the name and on behalf of Her Majesty by a Secretary of State aided by a Council, a majority of whom will be nominated by Her Majesty. All appointments to cadetships, naval or military, and all admissions to service not specially excepted, are vested in Her Majesty; the names of the persons recommended are to be submitted to Her Majesty by the Secretary of State.

What, then, are the special exceptions? The junior situations in the Civil Service, and the cadetships in the Artillery and Engineers.

The civil servants have for three years been chosen by open competition ; and this is one of those grants which, once made, cannot safely be withdrawn. The mode of selecting the cadets for the scientific corps of the army of India is but the extension of the principle conceded in the British army by the authority and with the consent of Her Majesty.

In my humble judgment no means of opening lucrative and honourable employment to the most meritorious of the middle classes can be devised with less danger to the Crown and with more advantage to the public. It is not the surrender of any patronage at present vested in Her Majesty ; it is, in the main, the continuance of an existing arrangement, which will be more effective in stimulating education than any grants of public money. And it is a concession without which, I am satisfied, no India Bill substituting the power of the Crown for that of the Company could have been carried through Parliament.

The indulgent condescension of your Royal Highness has made me bold in frankly stating my opinion.

I am an old servant of the Queen. I have endeavoured to serve Her Majesty faithfully. I would take no step which in my conscience I believed to be injurious to the Queen. I should have failed in truth and loyalty if I had concealed my opinion.

In the end Graham's tenacious and spirited resistance to this Lords' amendment prevailed, with admirable results for the future in India of first appointments by merit, instead of by patronage.

To Mr. Gladstone

Private.

GROSVENOR PLACE, July 31, 1858.

The newspapers will have informed you of the result of our battle with the Lords of the subject of competitive examination, as applied to the scientific branches of the Indian army.

The pressure on the Government from Osborne was extreme ; they were compelled to yield to it ; but Lord

Stanley acted with honesty and firmness, and was, I have reason to know, quite prepared to resign his office. I made it as easy as I could for him to uphold the principle and to remain at his post. Palmerston, as is his wont on trying occasions, backed the Government in their least worthy proceeding, and Lord John, whom I had summoned from Richmond to the rescue, failed to appear.

The course, however, of competitive examination as against patronage is greatly advanced, and you and Stanley will live to see it signally triumphant.

This is the cheap and the real mode of encouraging the education of the people, without ruinous assistance from the public purse, and without odious distinctions of religious creed.

The whole situation was further discussed with Mr. Gladstone quietly at Netherby, whither he was accompanied by his eldest son.

NETHERBY, August 17, 1858.

I look forward with much interest and desire to a conversation with you on the state and outlook of affairs, at ease and out of the heat, now that we have left behind us the '*fumum et opes strepitumque Romæ*.'

One does not know which puzzles most, the state of the Government or of the Opposition.

I see no great likelihood of improvement in the latter while Lord Palmerston is where he is, and no reason why, so far as age is concerned, he should not abide there for years.

I am anxious to make the acquaintance of your son—

'Tua clara, Polite,
Progenies, auctura Italos.'

For his father's sake I have a kindness towards him, for his own I am more than ready to approve. I hear from every quarter that he is all you could desire.¹

¹ William Henry Gladstone, afterwards Member of Parliament successively for Chester, Whitby, and East Worcestershire. Died July 4, 1891.

CHAPTER XVI

1858-59

Correspondence on Reform and on National Defence—Overtures from Lord John Russell, and from Ellice—Bright's Radical Proposals—Conservative Reform Bill—Walpole and Henley resign—Russell's Amendment—Graham advocates Enfranchisement of Working Classes—Duke of Argyll agrees—Gladstone defends Small Boroughs—Defeat of Ministers—Graham's Journal—Foreign Policy of Lord Aberdeen.

IN the recess Sir James Graham continued to correspond with Lord John Russell. Of the two, Sir James was now the more advanced Reformer.

To Lord John Russell

NETHERBY, *September 1, 1858.*

Gladstone comes here to-morrow. I will show him your outline of two Reform Bills. He will like them as little as my views on Church matters.

For my own part, abating the minority clause, I cannot regard any new measure of Parliamentary Reform as more safe, just, and unobjectionable than the Bill introduced by you and me on behalf of Lord Aberdeen's Administration. £10 for counties, £6 for cities and boroughs, with rating and residence respectively, are qualifications that will extend the popular power within limits which I consider sufficient. A plan which fails to give such extension is delusive.

I am afraid that partial disfranchisement of the very small boroughs only will leave an opening for fresh demands and renewed agitation. Yet in politics what is practicable must be considered as well as what is desirable, and beyond all doubt disfranchisement is the

part of the proposal which it will be most difficult to carry.

But without Ballot and without disfranchisement no popular enthusiasm is to be expected in favour of a new Reform Bill; and if it be not powerfully backed out of doors, it will be stillborn.

Lord Derby and Lord Palmerston are well matched as Reformers, and ought not to be opposed to each other. Lord Stanley's position is far different. His views and opinions are sincerely Liberal, and he cannot long remain a member of his father's Cabinet. What his future destiny may be it is hard to foresee. We once before thought that 'Lord Stanley' was the *decus et tutamen* of the Whigs.

From Lord John Russell

WOBURN ABBEY, *September 5, 1858.*

When you say you would be satisfied with the Bill of 1854 barring the minority clause, I think you do not reckon how great a change would be made in that Bill by such an omission. It would be the substitution of Radical members for large towns for the present quiet members for existing boroughs, or for the Liberal Tories who would probably come in under the minority clause.

I think thirty members taken from the smaller boroughs quite sufficient, and am not prepared to go farther in the way of disfranchisement.

To Lord John Russell

NETHERBY, *November 27, 1858.*

When Gladstone was here I showed him your heads of two Reform Bills. He made little comment, but thought it would be unwise prematurely to fix details. He was less hostile to Reform itself than I expected, and he expressed an opinion that no Government could now stand which blinked the question.

Since I wrote to you last, your position with respect to Reform has been essentially altered.

It was then doubtful whether the Minister would produce a measure; it is now understood that he is preparing one. It was then possible that the Liberals

might be united in support of a plan to be proposed by you ; it is now clear that every such hope has vanished, and that Bright has made a move in advance for the express purpose of forestalling you.

In these altered circumstances your decision is surely wise not to move until you see Derby's measure. Indeed your course must be guided by the proceedings not only of the Government, but of Bright. The channel will be buoyed for you by the wrecks, right and left, of the ships leading in.

You are no bad pilot when the waves run high ; but in this case it is wiser to await than to seek the storm. Derby will soon find himself in the midst of it without chart or compass ; and friend Bright is no helmsman in extremity.

The last letters of the year relate to National Defence, on which the authority of Sir James Graham stood high.

To Lord John Russell

Private and Confidential.

NETHERBY, December 6, 1858.

You mention two subjects of great importance, which are uppermost in high places ; and it happens that my attention has been specifically directed to both of them within the last fortnight.

You are so obliging as to say that you would like to know my opinions. The shortest way will be to send for your own perusal, in strict confidence, letters which have passed between me and Cardwell on the subject of the Naval Reserve, and between Lord Stanley and me with regard to the reorganisation of the Indian army.

Of a Naval Reserve your view entirely coincides with mine. The object to be aimed at is the power of doubling our number of seamen in two months, without impress if possible. This is the primary want ; everything else is secondary. We have now more ships than we can man ; and as to dockyards, large outlay on new works must be watched with great jealousy. Some risks are better than certain evils. Even war is one of them.

[Enclosure 1]

*To Mr. Cardwell**November 24, 1858.*

I shall be sincerely glad if the result of your Commission be the establishment of a permanent effective Reserve for the Navy. But the late Government undid what I laboured to do ; and the reduction of the Marines and the summary dismissal of 3,000 continuous service men at the end of the war were blows inflicted on a young system heavier than it could bear.

In my evidence I stated without reserve my deliberate convictions. The Marines ought never to be less than 20,000, the Coast Guard 10,000, the Coast Volunteers 10,000. Of these 40,000 men, 30,000 may be considered a Reserve for war ; and if we provide the means of promptly doubling this Reserve, thus raising it to 60,000 men, all will have been done which can reasonably be desired.

On an emergency 10,000 men must be added to the Marines, bringing up the entire force of Marines in war to 30,000, and there will remain the necessity of providing 20,000 prime seamen, in addition to the Reserve in time of peace.

As I think, this must be done partly by inducement, partly by compulsion when the real necessity arises. The inducement must be bounty ; the compulsion must be embargo, proclamation, and, at the expiration of the short period proclaimed, compulsory service.

This is the law now ; it has never been tried, but I believe it will be found effectual.

In cold blood compulsory service will not bear argument. When the danger of invasion is clearly imminent, will a British seaman refuse to defend his country ?

*To Lord Stanley**NETHERBY, November 28, 1858.*

It is impossible to exaggerate the difficulty or the importance of the questions raised in your letter. The right solution of them involves directly the safety of India, and indirectly the future organisation and command of the British army.

Before I presume to give an opinion in public on the Indian part of the question, I should wish to know what are the opinions of Lord Canning, Lord Clyde, and General Mansfield on the one hand, and of Sir John Lawrence and Sir James Outram on the other.

The real object of the Commission is to ascertain and to sift the deliberate judgment of such men ; and I have always thought that a large part of this inquiry might have been better conducted in India.

Moreover, this Indian question is intimately, indeed indissolubly, connected with the command of the army at home, and with the official relations between the Horse Guards and the Secretary of State for War. These relations were somewhat hastily remodelled ; and it is doubtful whether they are as yet so perfect as to bear the additional weight of the army of India. . . .

These are high political considerations not to be lost sight of ; but they are hardly fit for discussion before a military Commission. The confidential advisers of the Crown must deal with them, and be prepared to lead the way when they come under discussion.

The Report of your Commission cannot fail to open the door to these and other topics of the most serious character ; and, though I do not attach much importance to my own opinions, yet in justice to myself and to the honest desire of serving the public faithfully, I wish to remain unpledged, until it is my duty to take a line definitely in Parliament.

The new year began with a proposal from Lord John for concerted action.

January 3, 1859.—I wish you and I and Sidney Herbert and Lewis could come to an understanding to act together in the House of Commons. I should be glad to act in conformity with the judgment of you three on all matters relating both to expenditure and to Reform of Parliament.

Gladstone has been for the present immured by Calypso Lytton, but I hope ἔσσεται νόστιμον ἡμᾶρ,¹ and then we shall see what he will do.

¹ He will some day return.

Bright has asked me to see him, and I am to receive him to-morrow morning. But what Lewis says of him is quite true. He has hoisted the republican flag, and tries in vain to pull it down again.

To this proposal Sir James replied in friendly terms, but on the ground of advancing years declined to take an active part in political organisation.

January 4.—Bright has overshot the mark, and has made the discovery. England is not prepared to follow him in repeating the experiment of a Commonwealth, and John is not a second Cromwell. In many respects his proposals are right, but he couples them with what is so dangerously wrong as to render all concert with him unsafe.

I have had no communication with Gladstone since he left England, when I did my utmost to dissuade him from accepting his mission. When he will return, and in what frame of mind, I cannot foresee.

I am always ready to communicate with you frankly and confidentially. You are the best judge with reference to your own position in what other quarters it may be expedient to extend these communications. I am on the kindest terms with Herbert, and I have never ceased to regard Lewis as a friend. But I do not desire to form any new political combination, feeling that I have had my hour, and the time for my departure is drawing near.

In a similar spirit Sir James replied to a proposal from Mr. Ellice for reunion of the old Whig aristocracy. He believed still in party, but not in that party, any more than in the old Peel party. He looked to a new Liberal combination.

NETHERBY, *January 7, 1859.*

I shall be delighted to see you here, and when we meet we can discuss more at leisure the subject of your letter to Lord Grey.

Your endeavours are honest, but will be unavailing. The broken fragments of the old Whig party are so shattered that they cannot be pieced together again. The old stagers have known each other too long and too well, and they dislike each other too much. The youngsters, if they possess the necessary abilities, may form a new party very much on the old principles ; but my belief is that they must look to Lord Stanley as their head.

I see no mutual friendships, no habits of familiar confidential intercourse, no disinterested love of the public service, which after all are the real cement of political combinations.

No man knows the difference between the old and the new Whigs so well as you. You remember on what terms they once lived together ; you see with what jealousies they now fly asunder, when they are brought by force and circumstances into contact. But these are personal difficulties ; under them lies hidden a much more serious obstacle to union.

From the want of concert, in the absence of timely and friendly communication, above all from the dissolution of party ties, every man of mark has fixed opinions of his own, which he is not prepared to yield to any existing authority ; least of all to such authorities as now set themselves up for dictators. The consequence is a Babel of opinions, and a confusion both of principles and of tongues.

New events will give rise to new combinations. I shall not live to see them, at all events I am too old to enter into them. But if parliamentary government be prolonged in this country, I am satisfied that it must rest on the basis of party.

Let Lord Derby make the first move. When we see what it is, we shall be better able to judge what public duty may require at our hands. In the meantime I am disposed to stand aloof from all pledges, predetermined to be true to the principles of Lord Grey's measure, which has worked well for a quarter of a century, and if enlarged with honesty and care may still give happiness and contentment to this nation when you and I are forgotten in our graves.

To Sidney Herbert Sir James reported his answer to Lord John, and added :

Edward Ellice is full of projects, and wishes through the intervention of the Duke of Bedford to establish a Whig reunion embracing the houses of Devonshire, Sutherland, and Howard.

All this was well enough some thirty years ago, but the spell was broken by Lord Grey's Reform Act, and the day is gone by when a conclave of Dukes could sway a Parliament.

For my part, in the main I still adhere to the Bill of 1854. I am disposed to resist subversion of the settlement of 1832. I do not wish the centre of power as then fixed to be shifted. I am content with the experience of the last quarter of a century. Domestic peace and good government have been secured ; the utmost liberty has been fully enjoyed. Some extension of the franchise compatible with safety to our form of government is, as I believe, just and expedient ; but organic changes must be firmly resisted, and the sense of the nation is happily opposed to them.

We have arrived at a point where full discussion in open Parliament will be most useful, and for one I am most anxious to remain unfettered by any private engagements, and to be free to act as sense of duty and of public safety may prompt in a critical emergency.

This resolution by no means precludes the most free and constant communication with friends whom I love and trust, like you and Lord Aberdeen. Indeed, I wish to correct my opinions in difficult circumstances by the light of others. But I am afraid of ambitious intrigues, and of dangerous steps in clambering to power, or in clinging to office, on the part of rival Premiers.

Mr. Herbert replied :

I am very much pleased at the answer you have given Lord John. He and the Whigs are incurable in their superstitions about ducal houses.¹

¹ For the rest see Lord Stanmore's Memoir.

Mr. Bright brought in a Bill, which both Russell and Graham, as 'moderate Reformers,' disapproved.

From Lord John Russell

January 19.—You understand the Reform question so thoroughly that you will perceive at once the drift of Bright's Bill. It is to transfer power to the great towns, and leave the land in a hopeless minority.

I think it will be well that I should revive the Bill of 1854, with a view to bring it in if Derby's Bill does not meet the views of Reformers. The main question is whether it will be right for me to propose a Bill not being in office. My opinion is yes, for this reason. If Derby's Bill stands for second reading, and there is no alternative but Bright's, shabby people will vote for Derby, as their only refuge from the Radicals. Even Palmerston himself might take this course.

January, 1831, saw us in Durham's little room discussing this question. *Non eadem aetas* ; but I trust the mind is not less friendly to Reform in either of us than it was then.

To Lord John Russell

NETHERBY, *January 21, 1859.*

Bright has avowed his purpose. He is dissatisfied with the mixed form of government under which we live, and he seeks to change it. He considers an hereditary peerage, a landed aristocracy, and an independent House of Lords inconsistent with liberty ; and because the second chamber is not representative he seeks to render the House of Commons purely democratic, to deprive land of its influence there, and to change that Assembly into a mere creature of numbers, apart from property and intelligence.

Our views were widely different in this respect when we framed the measure of 1832. We based the representation on property and intelligence, and carefully maintained the balance of power ; so blending the influence of land and numbers in the election of the representative body that collision with the Crown and an independent House of Lords might be avoided. It was a question of balance and of proportions.

It was said that we had miscalculated; that the Crown was endangered by our measure, and that the House of Lords could not stand the shock.

Events have falsified these predictions. Our calculations were just; our proportions were safe; and our 'bloodless revolution' has yielded for the last quarter of a century better legislation, greater national prosperity, more internal peace, less civil discord, than any other period of our parliamentary history can boast.

I should have been content to rest satisfied without further change, and to have stood on 'finality.' But this ground has been rendered untenable.

Yet, if driven from it, we must be very cautious to adhere to our principles, which experience has proved to be both sound and safe. The very necessity which forces us to retouch our handiwork ought to make us adverse to every needless alteration, and slow to adopt every doubtful proposal of fundamental change. I wish to adhere to the principles of the measure of 1832; I believe them to be susceptible of extension without danger if within reasonable limits; but I am opposed to any subversion of the existing balance of interests by Tory devices, and to any levelling process on the republican model, such as Bright seeks to carry by intimidation.

With you, therefore, I am disposed to fall back on the Bill of 1854, which (abating the minority clause) fulfils the conditions for which I contend. It amends, it expands, it does not subvert.

On the points which you raise I will give you my present opinion.

1. I would adhere to the schedules A and B of disfranchisement, as proposed in the Bill of 1854.

2. I prefer the ratepaying franchise, with residence, to any valuation franchise for all cities and boroughs. These are the reasons:

- (a) It is the municipal franchise, and it works well.
- (b) It simplifies registration.
- (c) It is the ancient franchise of scot-and-lot burghers.
- (d) It contains a principle on which a stand can be made in opposition to ulterior change.

3. The distribution of forfeited seats will be the battle-

field. Derby will seek unduly to favour counties; Bright is pledged to swamp the land. The *via media* is the course of prudence and of justice.

On the main question as to the part to be taken by you, I say stand ready and on your guard, but do not commit yourself prematurely. At the critical moment no one has knowledge and experience on this subject equal to yours, and you are the natural leader. I am true to the old alliance.

From Lord John Russell

January 22, 1859.

I write only to say that your letter has given me the greatest possible satisfaction. I entirely concur in the line to be pursued.

When Parliament met, Lord John Russell, as Graham advised, waited to see the Conservative Reform Bill brought in by Disraeli.

Its chief features were two. It lowered the county franchise to £10, and it did not lower the borough franchise, extending it only by what Bright called 'fancy franchises'—votes for schoolmasters, graduates, and all who held pensions from Government, or certain investments in the Funds, etc.

On assimilation of the county to the borough franchise two Ministers resigned, Walpole and Henley.

On the question of lowering the £10 limit, carried by himself in 1832, Lord John moved:

That no readjustment of the franchise will satisfy the House which does not provide for a greater extension of the suffrage in cities and boroughs than is contemplated in the present measure.

In the debate on this resolution the speech of Sir James Graham is of special interest as his latest parliamentary

utterance on amendment, after a quarter of a century's experience, of the Reform Act of which he had been one of the first framers and most vigorous supporters.

The Act of 1832 [he said] was made large and comprehensive in the hope that it would be accepted as final. For many years I clung to it in that sense ; but, finding that finality is no longer tenable, I have felt it to be my duty to reconsider the question.

Two years ago I voted for reducing the county franchise from £50 to £10. Conservatives then protested against making it identical with the borough franchise. Yet that is the very course they now recommend. Identity of suffrage, it is avowed, is the keystone of their measure. It provides also for voting papers.

Now suppose these two things were law. How easily in some rash moment might the identical £10 qualification be reduced to household suffrage, or manhood suffrage ; how easily might sealed voting papers bring in secret voting !

On the other hand, this Bill does nothing to remedy a chief imperfection in the Reform Act, the uniform borough franchise. That franchise has not shown itself sufficiently elastic : it has not expanded with the growing intelligence of the people. The ' fancy franchises ' proposed I will not disparage, but they will not effect what I chiefly have in view, namely, that with the growth of population, of wealth, and of education there should be a corresponding increase in the number of voters.

I have conferred with my noble friend [Lord John Russell]—is it unnatural that we two, the sole survivors of those who framed the Reform Bill of 1832, should confer together ?—and it does not seem impossible to introduce a Bill which should find acceptance. It should include these points : a lowering to a considerable extent of the borough franchise ; disfranchisement, within moderate limits, of the smaller boroughs ; and enfranchisement, with strict impartiality, of the larger counties and the larger cities. A Bill so formed would command, I believe, the support of the majority of the House.

And here Sir James Graham went on to express, for the first time in public, his ripened judgment in favour of an important departure in principle from Lord Grey's Reform Act. He had already commented unfavourably on the arbitrary £10 franchise, which the Whigs, against Sir Robert Peel's protest, had substituted for 'scot-and-lot' and other time-honoured qualifications, with the effect, if not with the intention, of destroying such scanty representation as the old Constitution had conferred on the working classes. He had dwelt on the progress made by them in wealth, education, and intelligence. He now went farther. He proceeded boldly to urge that political power should no longer remain lodged solely in those in whom it was vested in 1832.

The operation [he said] and the object of the Bill of 1832 was to transfer power to the middle classes. But it is a mistake to hold that the humbler classes also do not take a real and deep interest in elections. It is a dangerous error to infer, because they are not turbulent, that they have not the question at heart. Speaking in a strictly Conservative sense, I am convinced that it is infinitely more prudent to make timely concessions to reasonable demands than obstinately to resist them. The demands of the working classes for the franchise are reasonable, and can no longer safely be refused.

An honourable member has alleged that taxes are paid chiefly by the upper classes. That I deny. Take six articles—sugar, tea, coffee, malt, tobacco, spirits. The taxes on these articles nearly cover the interest of the National Debt, and are paid mainly by the humblest of the working classes.

In respect of taxation, then, these classes are entitled to be represented; on the ground of ancient usage they are entitled to it; on the ground of their increasing wealth, intelligence, and numbers they have a fair claim to a larger share of the national representation. The

time has come when political power should begin to descend to those who labour with their hands.

Thus, two years before his death, and eight years before Lord Derby's democratic Reform Act of 1867, Sir James Graham in his place in Parliament laid down almost the very lines on which that measure became law: maintenance of open voting; for counties an occupation franchise of £10 (Lord Derby made it £12); in boroughs votes for all resident ratepayers; disfranchisement of a moderate number of the smallest boroughs; and more members for large counties and towns.

The Duke of Argyll, a moderate but sincere Reformer, wrote to recognise the practical value of the speech, and to express his general approval.

March 29, 1859.—I cannot help congratulating you, but far more the country and Parliament, on your speech last night; giving what was so much needed, a practical direction to the wishes of the House hitherto so unsettled and uncertain.

I entirely agree in almost all you say. The important thing has been to indicate something like a clear opinion on what can be safely and therefore wisely done. There has been a sad want of sincerity and earnestness of purpose hitherto; 'no certain sound,' as if any leader knew whither he was leading.

I only regret what you said about Ballot. To announce so broadly that it is gaining ground is to propel its advance at an increasing rate, whereas I believe it to be one of those shallow cries which have an extensive but superficial popularity, but which it only requires firm purpose and strong expression of enlightened opinion to resist with success.

Mr. Gladstone, on the other hand, as yet no keen Reformer, and personally pledged to give Lord Derby

general support, spoke and voted against Lord John Russell's resolution. He still, in 1859, stood on the lines on which Sir Robert Peel in 1831 had defended Old Sarum. He pled earnestly for boroughs such as had returned Burke and Mackintosh, Pelham, Chatham, Fox, Pitt, Canning, Peel. But in vain. Backed powerfully by Graham, Lord John Russell's amendment was carried by a majority of thirty-nine, and Lord Derby appealed from the House of Commons to the country.

On this occasion Sir James Graham once more kept a journal to record what passed.

April 1, 1859.—This morning the House of Commons decided, in the fullest House I have seen since 1835, against the Reform Bill introduced by the Government.

Mr. Disraeli, in winding up the debate made an able speech, but one more calculated to cover a defeat than to win a victory. He showed clearly enough how the Government had been led, not by conviction, but by necessity, to the adoption of the £10 county franchise, which he rather deprecated than defended; and he took his stand on the maintenance of the £10 occupation value in boroughs as the best security against admission of the working classes to power in overwhelming numbers.

The Cabinet met early, and Lord Derby went to the Queen in the afternoon. At a later hour he conveyed an intimation that the course he should pursue would be in obedience to the Queen's commands. I infer that there will be no resignation.

What follows shows some stand made at this time by Graham as a Liberal against persistent inclinations of his friend Lord Aberdeen, who, though now Liberal in home affairs, in foreign policy had remained 'an old Tory,' of the school of Wellington and Castlereagh, an upholder of the arbitrary compacts of the Treaty of

Vienna against the claims of nations to shake off a foreign military yoke and to conduct their own affairs.

At the present crisis he did not stop short of owning that he preferred as Foreign Secretary Lord Malmesbury to Lord John Russell. Indeed, to Sir James it seemed that Lord Aberdeen was more ready at this time to involve Great Britain in war for Austria against Italy than five years earlier he had been to invade Russia on behalf of Turkey. In favour of Austria he felt so strongly that it inclined him to keep both Palmerston and Russell out of power.

April 2.—Called on Lord Aberdeen. I found him much ruffled, and indisposed to favour a change of administration.

He fears the foreign policy at this juncture either of Lord John or of Lord Palmerston, if either should be placed at the head of affairs; and he said that Lord Malmesbury, acting at the approaching Congress under Lord Derby, was more trustworthy than any Whig Ambassador.

I denied the competency of Lord Malmesbury, and recalled three signal errors committed in our foreign policy within the last twelve months.

Lord Aberdeen could not deny or palliate these failures. Still he contended that what Prince Albert had said was true, that 'Malmesbury cannot write English, but he is an Englishman'; which being interpreted means that he is more German than French in his policy at this moment.

I defended Lord John from the suspicion of any undue leaning towards France, and remarked that *he* had never visited Compiègne, nor degraded the British Parliament by servile adulation of the French Emperor, such as had sullied the lips both of Malmesbury and of Disraeli.

I brought Lord Aberdeen to a better mind. But he is ready to embark England in war on the side of Austria, if France and Sardinia invade Italy; and he

contends that the case is much stronger than the occupation of the Principalities by Russia, which we made the cause of war in 1854. He says that the obligations of the Treaty of Vienna are more binding on England in defence of the Austrian possessions in Italy than any engagements contracted by England to uphold the independence and integrity of Turkey.

I said that no English Minister could involve this country in war in aid of Austria's occupation of Lombardy and Venice.

His answer was, 'If that be so, we have fallen from our high estate, and must rank with Monaco in the scale of European powers.'

On Reform Graham gave advice to another friend. The journal proceeds :

Lord John Russell called on me late in the evening. He was restless and uneasy. He began to talk of asking leave on Monday for the introduction of a Reform Bill by himself, and of moving an address to the Crown assuring Her Majesty that the consideration of Reform recommended in the Speech from the Throne should not be abandoned by the House.

I begged him not to arrive even in his own mind at any such hasty determinations. It was necessary to wait to see the game of the Government fully disclosed, and to ascertain their intentions ; and even then the utmost caution would be necessary in the next step to be taken by him. I told him that a general vote of want of confidence could not be carried ; that Reform was the only ground on which a firm stand could be made, and that even here great discretion must be used. I succeeded in impressing these views upon him, and he left me, more prudent and less excited.

On the Monday Sir James Graham had a further conversation with Lord Aberdeen, directed to emphasising the importance of the constitutional question that would arise should the Queen retain Lord Derby as her Minister

after his defeat in the House of Commons, a course which Lord Aberdeen inclined to approve.

April 3.—Everything is still conjecture, nothing certain is known. My belief is that Lord Derby continues in office by the Queen's express desire, with power to dissolve. I stated to Lord Aberdeen this belief. He assented, and vindicated the prudence of the course.

I questioned it on several grounds. It would be the first time in the Queen's reign when she placed herself in conflict with a majority of the House of Commons. She identifies her prerogative with the fate and fortunes of a falling Ministry. She marks a deeper sense of foreign relations than of domestic policy. She declares that Lord Derby and Lord Malmesbury alone are trustworthy in the management of foreign affairs. If the Reform Bill is to be abandoned, the act is hers, and the wishes of the people are to be set at naught.

There is no precedent for this adoption of a Minister in a minority, and of his beaten policy, except that of George III. in the case of Mr. Pitt and his India Bill in 1784. But there the India Bill of the Opposition was unpopular, and the dislike of it was shared by the King and his people. Here the Bill of the Minister is unpopular, has been condemned by the House of Commons, and cannot really be approved by the Crown. This single difference with a view to a dissolution is an inversion of the precedent, and renders the course taken by the Queen both unexampled and dangerous.

The interference and wishes of foreign Ministers will not mend the matter, and the danger is great that the cause of Italian independence will be identified with Reform of Parliament, and a revolutionary character will thus be given to the struggle both at home and abroad. All this was stated by me to Lord Aberdeen.

But he is engrossed with the desire to uphold the Vienna Settlement at all hazards. He is ill satisfied and sore when I press these arguments home. His communications with me have never before been so much disturbed.

Ellice had been with him, abusing both me and Lord

John, and identifying us with Bright. He gave also the assurance that he could bring to Lord Derby's rescue the votes of fifty Liberals in the present House of Commons.

This may be so at first, but no one can answer for the effect of a battle fought out in the popular sense against the Court and an anti-Reform Tory Ministry.

I met Strzelecki in the Park. He says that the pressure of all the foreign Ministers at this Court, except France and Sardinia, is most urgent in favour of upholding Derby. Their dread of Palmerston and John Russell is extreme. Gladstone, however, is more implacable against Austria than either of them. A beaten Ministry, upheld by Foreign Powers after a defeat on a popular question, will not long be very acceptable to the English people.

Next day, however, the situation was made clear, and regular, with—as Sir James Graham admits—no violation of constitutional procedure.

April 4.—The Government secret was well kept. The House met in entire ignorance of the intentions of the Minister. Mr. D'Israeli, after a prelude of self-laudation and of thanks to both sides of the House, which was not ungraceful or ill executed, announced an immediate dissolution of the present Parliament. He released the Government from all engagements as to the introduction of another Reform Bill, but promised that a new Parliament should be called together with the least possible delay. Lord Palmerston answered in a becoming tone, and withdrew the unwise threat of a former evening that he would obstruct a dissolution by withholding the necessary vote of credit.

Lord John very imprudently gave an outline of his proposed Reform Bills. The effect was that he appeared evidently to be making a bid for popular favour, and no very high bid either.

Lord Derby scolded in the House of Lords. He blamed everybody but himself. Yet it was clear that he felt at heart painful misgivings.

Thus the ministerial crisis has been brought to a close

for the moment. An appeal has been made from the Parliament to the country, and the Ministers must abide the issue. The fate of parties, and the future policy of the nation for some time to come, is committed to the will and pleasure of the electoral body.

I have so much faith in the Reform Act of 1832 that I do not fear the event. There will be no miscarriage.

On that subject Lord Aberdeen had written :

January 23, 1859.—I am rather amused at you and Lord John complimenting each other on the wisdom and efficiency of the Reform Bill, to which you are quite welcome. But you must be aware that it contained the germ of Bright's Bill, and of half a dozen others. When an aristocracy is turned into a democracy, from the nature of things it must proceed. Peel's wonderful prudence, and the good sense of the people, have done much : but, as I do not think the Reform Bill did any great good, I do not expect much from any other ; and I do not know that even Bright's would bring us destruction.

CHAPTER XVII

1859-60

Re-election at Carlisle—Speech on Changes of Political Opinion—Personal Counsel to Lord John Russell—Refusal to take Office—Attack by Disraeli—‘The Red Indian of Debate’—Palmerston forms a Government—Thanks Graham for Aid—Commercial Treaty with France—Annexation of Savoy and Nice—Expenditure on Fortifications—Advice to Lord Dufferin—Rest at Home.

IN anticipation of the impending election, Sir James Graham had written to his agent :

In the present unsettled state of parties it is impossible to predict what may happen any day. For my part I am entirely opposed to the Conservative Reform Bill. I adhere to my opinion, expressed long ago, that the occupation franchise in counties may be lowered to £10 ; and I should not object to the municipal franchise in cities and boroughs ; at all events the £10 there must be considerably lowered.

I cannot pledge myself to the support of Ballot, which I consider most objectionable. And here is the split in the Liberal party by means of which my overthrow at Carlisle will be attempted.

Wilkes & Co. [local politicians], acting in concert with Mr. Bright, are bent on it, because I will not surrender my opposition to Ballot and join the ranks of the extreme Radicals. I had rather be turned out than tamely submit to such dictation.

I conclude that Hodgson will support the Government measure, and any concert between him and me is impossible. Lawson and his father sincerely entertain extreme opinions, and may be considered partisans of

Mr. Bright. Lawson would go the whole length, would pledge himself to Ballot, and would go ahead of me. My natural position would be a middle one between the two extremes, and, as usual in such cases, a weak one, and liable to come to the ground.

Political gratitude is not an active principle ; but it would be ungracious in Carlisle to reject me at my age, and at the close of a long career, because younger men may be ready to go faster and further than I can, and because I adhere firmly and honestly to disinterested but fixed opinions. In my day I have done much for popular rights. Others may make larger professions ; I can appeal to past services.

At his nomination—which he attended against advice of his doctor—he acknowledged that on political questions he had not been always of one mind.

Something has been said about change of opinion. Well, gentlemen, the last half-century has been the period of my active life. Within that period all has changed around me. I have seen the face of nature change. I have seen morasses converted into dry ground ; I have seen desert wastes in this country made to teem with golden harvests ; I have seen grass supplanting heather, and running up to the tops of our highest hills.

I have seen night turned into day in our cities and dwellings by the aid of gas ; I have seen time and distance all but annihilated by the locomotive power of steam, by sea and land ; I have seen the electric telegraph conveying from zone to zone the intercourse of man, by sparks stolen as it were from heaven.

I have seen mighty monarchies fall ; I have seen republics, founded on their ruins, crumble into dust ; I have seen military despotism grow up, and wither.

And shall man, frail man, amidst all these changes of nature and of policy, alone stand immovable, unaltered in his opinions and feelings ? If a man is to refuse to yield to the pressure of the times, and of the circumstances in which his lot is cast—if he is not open to conviction,

and, notwithstanding the altered state of affairs and the changed condition of things around him, refuses to alter his opinions, such a man may be fit for a lunatic asylum, but I say he does not possess the true recommendation for any deliberative assembly in the world.

i

Such were the last words addressed by Sir James Graham to those with whom it lay to send him back or not to Parliament for the brief remainder of his days—words not unworthy of the occasion.¹

Responding heartily to this frank appeal of their veteran member, the men of Carlisle returned him at the head of the poll, himself avowedly opposed to Ballot, but with a colleague of extreme opinions, his Radical nephew Wilfrid Lawson.

During and after the election Lord John Russell continued to consult Sir James not only as to the best course to be taken in the new Parliament, but as to his personal relations with Palmerston and with the Whigs, on all which Sir James gave readily his best advice.

From Lord John Russell

May 7, 1859.

Derby will produce the reverse of what he professed, namely, a House of Commons that will not be faithful to any Government. I think it must be considered as a Constituent Assembly, and only meet for the purpose of passing a Reform Bill. But for the present state of Europe an able if not a strong Ministry is required.

With regard to myself, unless I can see you and Gladstone and Sidney Herbert in office, I'll none of it. With you three, and the Duke of Somerset, Milner Gibson, and if possible F. Baring, I think a Government might be formed. The Duke of Newcastle, George Lewis, and two

¹ Mr. Gladstone writes to Sidney Herbert, 'Is not Graham's speech at Carlisle superlative?'—Stanmore, ii. 178.

or three more of the Palmerston set, might complete the Cabinet.

Such is my view. Otherwise Palmerston may try to construct a Cabinet like the last, and probably fail.

To Lord John Russell

NETHERBY, *May 9, 1859.*

The malpractices and the dangerous consequences of this dissolution are only just beginning to disclose themselves. The means employed have been unscrupulous. They will not save Lord Derby from ultimate defeat, but they will render the future government of this country infinitely more difficult, and lead in the end to greater changes than you or I consider safe.

No Reform Bill can pass in this Parliament which does not suit the taste of Lord Palmerston and Lord Derby. The minimum of the one and the maximum of the other are in such close affinity that the opposite parties on this point will easily come to a settlement. The distribution of power is the only real difficulty between them. Whether the new House will prefer Derby or Palmerston as the Minister of peace, retrenchment, and reform, I cannot say; but the union of the two in some way or other would seem to be for the moment the probable solution of existing difficulties; and a Government might thus be formed which would command a majority of the present House.

There is not in my view much to choose between Derby and Palmerston. The one was a Whig, and has become a Tory, the other for half a century has been a Tory at heart. He was so always, and is so still.

I have been very unwell, and am not recovering as you would kindly wish. I am afraid that the approaching session will not be a restorative to my drooping spirits.

From Lord John Russell

May 16, 1859.

George Lewis brought me yesterday a kind of message from Palmerston. I find he would disapprove any amendment censuring the dissolution, or insisting upon immediate introduction of a Reform Bill, or censuring the

conduct of foreign affairs. But he would approve of an amendment or an early notice of motion declaring want of confidence.

I said I thought Peel's amendment in 1841 the right precedent to follow, and that we ought to accept Lord Derby's challenge, whatever might be the result. I promised to ask your opinion.

Many say that before such a motion is made the chiefs ought to be agreed as to a future Government. I have entered into no conversation with G. Lewis or any one else on that subject, but I should like to see the Duke of Somerset, Sidney Herbert, Sir James Graham, Sir F. Baring, Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Milner Gibson, members of any future Cabinet. Measures of Reform must be introduced and the general principles of my resolution adhered to.

But the immediate question regards an amendment, and after what you have said at Carlisle I cannot doubt that you will support a vote of want of confidence.

In regard to *myself*, it is a subject of so much importance that I must keep it for a separate letter.

I hope your strength is returning. There is no want of vigour in your speeches, and a gallop or two over Canobie Lea will, I trust, quite set you up.

To Lord John Russell

May 17, 1859.

I have no doubt whatever that the dissolution is indefensible, that the management of foreign affairs has been bungled, and that the omission of all mention of Reform in the Queen's Speech will be most unseemly. I should be prepared to give expression to one or all of these opinions by my vote on an amendment to the Address, if such vote would combine the support of the united Liberal party. But I feel that, in the presence of three hundred Tories who will vote as one man to keep Lord Derby in power, it matters little what I or any other ten persons may be ready to do. The question is how can the 350 Liberals be brought to act together.

In this view Mr. Bright has gained great additional power by the dissolution. Doubtless he has some thirty-five firm adherents in the new Parliament who will be

steady in following his lead. If this be no over-estimate, the balance of parties is practically in his hand ; he can turn the scale for or against Lord Derby exactly as he pleases.

It must be remembered also that your position is anomalous. If the old Whigs and the extreme Liberals support you, you could not carry on the Government in the face of three hundred Tories without the assistance of Lord Palmerston and his quasi-Liberal adherents.

I have no communication direct or indirect with Mr. Bright. I know nothing of his intentions, but I suspect what his decision would be in a choice between Lord Derby and Lord Palmerston.

Speaking for myself alone, I should have no difficulty in concurring in a vote of want of confidence in Lord Derby, if this be generally considered the wisest course. But I should wish the form of motion to be adopted which will ensure the largest possible support from the entire body of the Liberal party.

I have no personal objects whatever. I desire to act cordially with you as much as possible. But if office were offered to me under any circumstances my determination is not to accept it.

From Lord John Russell

May 17, 1859.

I said I would write again about my own position, and I am sure you will excuse my tediousness, both on public grounds and from private friendship.

¹ There is a great disposition in the Liberal party to say that the differences between Palmerston and me are the cause why a Liberal Government cannot be made. Now, although this is not true, I feel that I ought, if called upon, to destroy all reasonable ground for saying that my personal pretensions stand in the way of the public welfare.

On the other hand I cannot, without sacrificing public objects, accept office without power, and expose myself

¹ What follows has appeared before in Walpole's *Life of Lord John Russell*.

to be strangled at any moment by the mutes of the party.

There are two situations of influence in the general as distinguished from the departmental government of the country ; the one that of Prime Minister, the other that of Leader of the House of Commons. In the case of Mr. Pitt, and Sir Robert Peel, when First Lord of the Treasury, these two positions were combined in one. In other cases they have been divided, as between Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox, Lord Grey and Lord Althorp, Lord Melbourne and me, etc.

It seems to me that in the present case, if a Liberal Ministry is to be formed, power ought to be divided on fair and equal terms. That is, if Palmerston is Prime Minister, I should lead in the Commons ; if I were to be Prime Minister, he ought to lead in the House of Commons. In either case the nomination to Cabinet offices ought to be concerted between us.

To Lord John Russell

NETHERBY, *May* 18, 1859.

If the matter at issue were simply an arrangement between you and Palmerston, the solution would be comparatively easy. But no arrangement, so far as you are concerned, can be permanent or satisfactory which is not sanctioned by the main body of honest Reformers.

Palmerston might shuffle on, with Tory support, without this aid : it would not become you to take a part in any such transaction.

The division of powers between you and Palmerston, such as you rightly contemplate, might work, and be found practicable, if you can agree beforehand on the principal features of your new Reform Bill, and on the maintenance of a strictly neutral and pacific foreign policy. Your strength will be greatest if you remain in the House of Commons, making the apparent sacrifice of yielding pre-eminence to an old man of seventy-five, but really removing him from the centre of power, which is in the Lower House.

But, however humiliating and painful the fact may be, without the concurrence of John Bright you cannot

succeed in overpowering Lord Derby, or in holding the Government, even conjointly with Palmerston, in opposition to the Tories and John Bright combined.

If Bright were an assenting party to the preliminary arrangements, and if Derby were ousted and a Liberal Government were once started, by the united efforts of the Liberal majority, future difficulties which are inevitable must be encountered, and much must be left to the course of events, always unsearchable, and yet so overpowering.

Your view of your own position appears to me to be correct, saving only the necessity of frank communication and a previous understanding with Bright. Should he make Ballot a *sine qua non*, he must be left in the absurd position of upholding a Tory Government rather than relinquish for a time what is as yet a hopeless crotchet.

Remember the last sentence of my letter of yesterday. I write to you as a private friend, and in no other capacity whatever. Not only I am no candidate for office, but my mind is made up. I will have no more of it during the short remainder of my life.

This, according to his brother, had been the decision of Sir James ever since he resigned office in 1855. Lord John Russell replied :

May 19, 1859.—I am very grateful to you for your letter, which I shall keep to myself as you desire.

I do not wonder at your determination, but it makes my position all the more difficult.

And later he reports :

May 23.—Palmerston came here three days ago, and we went over Reform, foreign politics, and the general composition of any Ministry that might succeed the present. On all these subjects we agreed very well.

As to headship I said, 'I say nothing as to office ; I hold myself quite free on that point.'

P. 'Quite right. It is for the Queen to say whom she will send for, and nothing can be settled before she has decided.'

So I remain of the mind I wrote to you, and consider I cannot be blamed if the affair miscarries. I consider your letters quite confidential, but I mentioned that you probably would not accept office.

We go to Wilton on Wednesday.

To Lord John Russell

NETHERBY, *May 24, 1859.*

I am very glad that you are going to Wilton. I have no secrets from Sidney Herbert, and if you think fit you may show him my letters to you. Indeed the substance of them is my deliberate opinion, and as such you may make it known to whom you please.

Your conversation with Palmerston is satisfactory as far as it goes, but it stops short of the vital point, which is the division of power between you two.

It is true that the Queen must send for the Minister whom she is disposed to prefer; but in this particular case it would be well to agree if possible beforehand on the distribution of parts, touching headship and the lead in the Commons.

If this be omitted, my fear is that at the critical moment a misunderstanding may arise, which would give to a rupture the character of personal jealousies apart from public interests. On whichever side the blame might rest, this would be an unseemly ground of miscarriage, and mutual previous frankness on this point might forestall the danger.

There may be some awkwardness in making the communication yourself to Palmerston. Might not a common friend, such as Sidney Herbert, make known your ultimatum as to the alternative, if, as I conclude, your fixed decision be already taken?

As matters now stand, you would lose nothing by this timely frankness; you might be greatly embarrassed by the omission, if the Queen sent for Palmerston and you refuse to join him, then for the first time insisting that he should go to the Upper House.

Forgive this suggestion; it is tendered in the sincerity of friendship.

From Lord John Russell

WILTON HOUSE, *May* 26, 1859.

I have had a long talk with Sidney Herbert, and read to him your letter. But my mind is not made up to offer that ultimatum which he and you seem to approve.

I have gone through too much, as you know—nobody better—to trust myself again to the uncertain waves, unless in a vessel very strongly built. And it requires large elements of confidence from the party to induce me to leave the independent position I now occupy.

At the same time I am sensible of the critical position of affairs both at home and abroad, and I do not like leaving the reins in such hands.

All I say is, I am not as yet ready to engage myself in a future Ministry of which I am not to be the head.

One very unfavourable symptom is that Gladstone hangs back. If he will not vote a want of confidence, will he accept office in a new Government?

From Lord Aberdeen

May 26, 1869.—The most brilliant stroke made was Palmerston's speech at Tiverton. His declared wish to see the Germans turned out of Italy by the war has secured Gladstone, who is ready to act with him, or under him, notwithstanding the three articles of the *Quarterly* and the thousand imprecations of late years.

When the new Parliament met, a simple vote of no confidence—to expel the Tories in 1859 as they had expelled the Whigs in 1841—was moved by the Marquis of Hartington.

In reply Mr. Disraeli poured forth torrents of sarcasm on his chief opponents. Beginning with Sir James Graham, he feigned to have thought at first that an after-dinner speech at Carlisle, attacking the Government, had come from Sir James's nephew Wilfrid Lawson, and to have made allowance accordingly.

When I read the charges upon Ministers, I naturally said, 'Young men will be young men. Youth will be somewhat reckless in assertion, and when we are juvenile and curly one takes a pride in sarcasm and invective.' Although the statements were not very agreeable to Her Majesty's Ministers, I felt that he was a chip of the old block. I felt that when that young gentleman entered this House he might—when gazing upon the venerable form and listening to the accents of benignant wisdom that always fall from the right honourable member for Carlisle—he might learn how reckless assertion may in time mature into accuracy of statement, and how bitterness and invective, however organic, can be controlled by the vicissitudes of a wise experience.

To this attack Sir James Graham replied in a corresponding tone of banter. After a compliment to his assailant as presenting in his own person proof that one might lose one's curls and yet retain a taste for sarcasm, he added :

When the right honourable gentleman first took his place in this House, I early—indeed immediately—recognised his great abilities, and without the slightest grudging I have watched his rise to his present pre-eminence. But intemperate language in a position such as he occupies is always proof to me of a failing cause, and I accept his expressions as a happy omen of the coming success of this motion.

He will pardon me if I express to him an opinion ; I regard him as the Red Indian of debate. By the use of the tomahawk he has cut his way to power.

The phrase was long remembered.

When the division came, in a House of 637 members, there was a majority against Ministers of thirteen. The Liberals absent were only ten. Mr. Gladstone, about whose probable action there had been endless guesses,¹ abstained from speaking, but voted for Lord Derby.

Lord Derby resigned, and the Queen sent first for

¹ See Morley's *Gladstone* i., 623-5.

Lord Granville, but afterwards entrusted the formation of a Government to Lord Palmerston. Lord Granville became President of the Council, Lord John Russell Foreign Secretary, Mr. Gladstone Chancellor of the Exchequer. To his constituents he explained that, having helped to overthrow Lord Palmerston's Ministry, he had thought it his duty to support, as far as he could, the Government of Lord Derby. On various occasions he had lent them such aid as was in his power, and, although he could not concur in their Reform Bill, he had at least taken no part against them. Thus having amply discharged his duty towards the late advisers of the Crown, but failed to save them, when Lord Palmerston invited him to join his new Cabinet, he felt himself free to accept the offer.

Sir James Graham adhered to his resolution not again to take office. But in the construction of the Government he rendered service warmly acknowledged in a pleasing exchange of letters.

From Lord Palmerston

94, PICCADILLY, June 29, 1859.

I was told by mutual friends at the time when I was charged to form a Government that you had made your mind up not to take office, and between old friends and former colleagues like you and me it seemed to be scarcely worthy of either that a proposal should be made which it was known beforehand would not be accepted.

But I must thank you, as I now do, very heartily and sincerely for the kind and friendly assistance which in the course of the late arrangements you have given to those of our mutual friends who have had occasion to consult you, and who have profited so much by the opinions and advice which you were so good as to give them.

Your great knowledge and experience of matters connected with almost every branch of our administrative

system make you a most valuable counsellor, and I feel greatly obliged by the readiness with which you have given your assistance to those who have asked it of you.

To Lord Palmerston

GROSVENOR PLACE, *June 30, 1859.*

I am touched by the kindness which, amidst so many cares and anxieties, has prompted you to write to me.

The task of forming a Government having been committed to you, I was most desirous that you should succeed. It was necessary for the public good that the structure of your Government should be comprehensive. You have made it as strong as circumstances would permit. I ascribe this success to your forgiving temper and exemplary fairness.

Your generous efforts to overcome great national difficulties deserve to be met in a corresponding spirit. I shall endeavour not to fail in this duty; the friendly tone of your letter is a warm encouragement.

Thus with the new Government Graham's relations, though independent, were most friendly. In Mr. Gladstone's phrase he 'declined office, but took his position in the party,' and that an influential position. Yet his letters show a craving for repose.

To Lord Aberdeen

August 15.—The dangers of the session have been surmounted by the Government; the glories of it are not dazzling. Herbert has had his own way, and is more than conqueror; Gladstone is settling down to his work in harness, as if he had not kicked over the traces, and nearly upset the coach; and Bright, after much bluster, has barked without biting, and is content to have Gibson in the Cabinet, and Cobden at Paris, without an attempt to bring the Lords into subjection.

Lord John is gone to Abergeldie. Her Majesty likes to have him under her own eye, to sip the cream of his views, and to sweeten the tartness of his epigrams.

September 2, 1859.—I am here doing the patriarch. I have five of my six children with me, and next week I shall have eight grandchildren assembled here. As phantoms vanish, and as sad experience teaches the truth that all on earth is vanity, we naturally cling more and more to home, and learn the happiness of the chimney corner.

To the Hon. Arthur Gordon

December 12.—I am occupied with my railroad and with my woods, and I quite realise the enjoyment which attends the ‘*sollicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ*.’

I almost shrink from plunging into the stream again. But the pleasure of constant and renewed intercourse with your father is an inducement to return to London, and when I hear the crack of the whip I suppose that I shall take to the collar.

In the new year Mr. Gladstone writes :

January 16.—We are in a period of great interest and hope, as well as in some respects, at least to me, of great anxiety. We have been employed upon special means of drawing closer our amicable relations with France. To promote this has been for the last few months I may almost say the operation for which I have been living. I have seen in it not merely the increase of influence for a peaceable settlement of the Italian question, not merely the extension—almost the consummation—of the tariff reforms begun in 1842, but also the means of allaying the passions that menace danger, and of shaming the fears which in my opinion have done us much discredit. These generalities, if you will let me, I wish to develop and apply by word of mouth.

Sir James Graham did not much relish negotiations to be conducted with Louis Napoleon.

To Mr. Gladstone

Private.

NETHERBY, *January 18, 1860.*

I have no taste for commercial treaties in the abstract. . . . Our wise commercial policy has superseded their

necessity so far as we are concerned. If the duties on silk and on wine be too high, after a careful review of our revenue and taxation by all means lower them ; and if France think it politic to maintain her prohibitory duties on our coal and our iron, let her indulge this gross error and pay the penalty. I am not anxious to lead her in the right way ; let her follow our footsteps when she pleases, and of her own will, which at present is bound up in the caprice of a single man.

With regard to naval and military estimates, those who advocate a commercial treaty with France can hardly at the same time contend for an increase of the standing army, for ten millions to be spent on fortresses, for Channel and Mediterranean fleets on a war scale, and for a National Guard in the shape of riflemen.

Our nearest neighbour is friendly and trustworthy, or he is not. Our policy must in some measure be based either on confidence or mistrust. We cannot act at the same time in the two opposite senses.

The Government alone knows which is the safe ground ; but the nation will require to be informed what is the basis of our policy, before we enter on a scheme and scale of taxation which are essentially warlike, and of which the current year has long been announced as the close, except in the event of impending hostilities.

My wish is to see you safe through all your difficulties, and not to add to them ; but it is a tangled web, which it will be easier to cut than to unravel.

When the French Emperor annexed Nice and Savoy, and was to be attacked in Parliament, Graham was invited, but declined, to take the leading part in the debate.

From Lord John Russell

March 7, 1860.

We think the best mode of meeting Kinglake's motion would be by an amendment, and that you would be by far the best person to move it.

Kinglake's motion evidently tends to war, or rather to

an ineffectual attempt to stir up war. The amendment should be, I think, a resolution rather than an Address to the following effect—though I don't pretend to give the words :

‘That this House, having read the correspondence relating to Savoy and Nice laid upon the table by Her Majesty's command, is content to leave the further conduct of these negotiations to Her Majesty's responsible Ministers.’

If you agree, pray give your notice to-morrow. I shall be happy to see you, if you wish it.

To Lord John Russell

March 7, 1860.

I have taken half an hour to consider your proposal and I have come to the decision that I must decline it.

I have ceased to take a prominent part in public affairs, and both on public and private grounds this is not the occasion which I am willing to choose for a return to active service.

I disapprove of Kinglake's motion, and I think that it should be met by some such amendment as you suggest.

But if I move it in concert with the Government in such critical circumstances, I am bound to say nothing which may impugn their past conduct, or add to their present difficulties : yet I am not prepared to adopt their policy with respect to Central Italy, which is the alleged cause of the annexation of Savoy.

If I move it not in concert with the Government, but as an independent member, then I make myself responsible for a policy perhaps at variance with yours ; my language and my opinions may embarrass you, and under the guise of officiously assisting I may rather injure you, at a moment when every word ought to be weighed in the balance.

Whatever I might be disposed to say on this great question must be the declaration of an individual opinion which carries no great weight.

These are my public reasons for declining.

My private reasons are, that I am not the fit champion

of the foreign policy of this Administration, although it is at present confided to you, whom I highly esteem and regard. Moreover I cannot forget the feelings of Lord Aberdeen at this juncture, whom to grieve in the slightest degree would be more painful to me than I can express.

I thank you therefore for this mark of your confidence and goodwill; but you must place your amendment in other hands.

The truth was that Graham's youthful zeal for 'Italia Una,' when he served with Italian troops under Lord William Bentinck, had cooled, and, while less Austrian than Lord Aberdeen, he distrusted Louis Napoleon as Liberator of Italy, under the auspices of Russell, Palmerston, and Gladstone. Lord John replied :

I am not at all surprised at your decision, and I cannot say you are wrong. . . .

I am glad you say the motion should be met by some such amendment as I suggest. I conclude you would support such amendment.

To the War Minister Sir James gave valuable advice as to the controversy between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister upon expenditure on fortifications and on militia, and especially as to the duty of frankness with the House of Commons.

To Mr. Sidney Herbert

Private and Confidential.

NETHERBY, *April* 10, 1860.

It appears to me that you are bound in your revised Estimate to state the sum total of the military expenditure which, in present circumstances, you consider necessary for the service of the year. You will be instantly pressed on this point. Any evasion would be unworthy of you.

This sum total ought to be the minimum which in your deliberate judgment is indispensable ; but when your mind is made up on this head, the means must be provided, or you cannot remain the responsible Minister.

I am an advocate for compromise and conciliatory adjustments among colleagues, so long as the clear sense of public duty is not violated ; but there is a limit beyond which character and honour are endangered, and early frankness and firm resolution often avert serious though late misunderstandings and ultimate disgrace.

Conscious rectitude and private sense of personal propriety seldom fail to mark this limit very distinctly, and one step beyond it is never made without bitter but unavailing regrets.

My hope is that you may still come to some agreement honourable to all ; but of one thing I am sure ; the House of Commons must be treated with unreserved confidence. Whatever you may resolve to do should be stated fully and at once. The issue may be doubtful, but the honour of public men will be saved.

Herbert ¹ wrote to Palmerston, quoting Graham's advice, and Graham wrote again to Herbert :

April 14.—It is now clear that your views and intentions cannot be reconciled with Gladstone's.

You think the Estimate as originally presented insufficient ; he regards it as excessive. You seek to augment it ; he does not promise to find the ways and means. You intend to ask for a loan of ten millions for fortifications ; he has told you distinctly that he will not be a party to any such loan.

In time of peace you cannot contemplate a loan without the provision of a large sinking fund to secure the rapid extinction of a new debt so unusual in its character.

The balance of the budget as it stands is quite unequal to meet this new charge. The sacrifice of revenue under the French treaty is accomplished ; but there remains the Paper Duty, yielding £1,400,000 a year.

Is it possible for the Cabinet in fairness to press forward

¹ For more of the letters see Lord Stanmore's *Memoir*.

this large reduction of income, when at the same time they are resolved to propose an increase of expenditure which they do not avow, and for which no provision has been made ?

The question really comes to this. Shall there be a loan for fortifications and no repeal of the paper duty, or a repeal of the paper duty and no fortification loan ?

I cannot bring myself to think that it would be right to advance the Paper Duty Bill another stage, leaving the House at the same time in ignorance of the resolution of the Cabinet regarding an addition to your military outlay. Jealousy in the House of Commons is a virtue, when the number and charge of the army in time of peace is the matter at issue.

I conclude therefore that before you present the amended Estimate, and before further progress is made in the Paper Duty Bill, you will come to a final settlement among yourselves in the Cabinet, and agree either to compromise or to break.

I must add that in my opinion evasions and delay are pregnant with public evils, and with great risk to the character of all parties concerned.

In return for your generous confidence I have stated my opinion frankly. It may be erroneous, but it is dictated by friendly anxiety in a case which touches so nearly both you and Gladstone.

April 29.—I am glad that a Godsend has been found in the Exchequer wherewith to stave off the immediate difficulty. These windfalls must be nearly exhausted ; malt credits, hop credits, unappropriated balances, will come to an end ; and the day of reckoning between increased expenditure and inadequate taxation must arrive at last. I am willing to hope that it may not be an angry one. I conclude that the paper duty is gone. How are the interest and sinking fund of the fortification loan to be met ?

It is evident that in this House of Commons the fear of dissolution predominates over every other fear ; and nothing will appease this apprehension but the *postponement* of the Reform Bill. I do not expect to see it come out of Committee in the present session. It is clear that the present is not regarded as the convenient moment

for any change. Bulwer's speech is an admirable argument against the increase of popular power, but it comes too late. Canning urged the same objections. The Duke of Wellington thought that he could stand upon them. But the tempest came, and swept them all away. The means of resistance were far stronger then than now.

I am not impatient for the change, but it is inevitable ; and those who live to see it will rue the day when moderate proposals were rejected, or postponed.

To Mr. Gladstone

Private.

GROSVENOR PLACE, June 2, 1860.

With regard to fortification and a fortification loan I retain the opinion which I expressed at an early stage of the discussion. I am not convinced of the necessity of this outlay, and whatever it may be necessary to do in this shape of warlike preparation should be met year by year out of the annual ways and means.

The enormous and growing amount of the naval and military estimates is indeed a subject of anxiety and alarm.

It must be admitted that we have a dangerous and most unscrupulous neighbour, and the risk of being taken off our guard is very serious. On the other hand the evils of war taxation and war expenditure, while peace is still preserved, are fatal in their effects both at home and abroad.

Supplementary estimates and additional taxation will bring the matter to issue. The war with China affords the opportunity, and it may not be amiss to apply at once this test to the will and spirit of the nation.

My advice remains unaltered. Stick together in the Cabinet as long and as firmly as possible ; but avoid borrowing, and in preference risk additional taxation.

July 15.—Your statement made the plan of a fortification loan quite intelligible to me, and further consideration has confirmed my first impression. Viewed as a measure of finance, it is very objectionable. . . .

I waive all the arguments on the policy and efficacy of the measure ; they fail to carry conviction to my mind. If as a compromise it satisfy you, and enable you to

remain in office, a great public object will be attained ; if it do not produce this effect, I anticipate no good from its adoption.

From Mr. Gladstone

Secret.

July 22, 1860.

Concessions have been made beyond my expectation at the last moment and under great pressure. . . . On the other hand I cannot view without uneasiness what I have to yield. On both sides the strain is great. I fear it cannot last long. Never at any time of my life have I had such a sense of mental and moral exhaustion.

To Mr. Gladstone

July 23, 1860.

My mind is relieved from much anxiety by the information that differences have been accommodated, and that you are enabled to remain in the Cabinet. I am certain that a rupture would have been injurious to all parties concerned, and I rejoice that you do not move to that dread abyss below the gangway.

A little later Sir James writes to a young rising statesman, his nephew, in regard to his mission for the Government to Syria :

To Lord Duerin

46, GROSVENOR PLACE, *July 29, 1860.*

It is of great importance that you should take with you an eligible private secretary of official habits and experience, such as the Foreign Office or Lord Cowley's Chancellerie can alone supply.

Your correspondence with the Home Government, with the British Embassies, with the French and foreign employés both civil and military, must be put into shape, and will require an expert in foreign languages and in diplomatic usage.

Recollect also that, if you wish to protect yourself, not a scrap of official writing which is not *copied* should ever pass from your hand.

I am anxious beyond measure on this point ; and I beg you to consult Lord John with respect to it.

Is ——— or ——— at the Foreign Office available ?

Be persuaded to follow my advice in this matter. It is the advice of a most affectionate friend.

From Lord Dufferin

PARIS, *August 9, 1860.*

I am so pleased to think that you approve of the tone of my letter to Lord John. I only wish I could feel quite at my ease in regard to those that I shall have to write to him hereafter. However, I can only try to do my best.

I went and saw Prince Napoleon, who made me stay to breakfast, and kept me talking afterwards for nearly two hours. He was very amicable in his professions towards England, spoke very contemptuously of Turkey, and gave me to understand that the expedition to Syria was undertaken by the Emperor merely with a view to satisfy public opinion. The Emperor seems to have used the same language to Lord Cowley.

I have written two official despatches to Lord John, one enclosing a connected and very carefully written narrative of the massacres in Syria, sent to me by W. Graham from Beyrout—the only really authentic account we have yet received ; and another detailing a conversation I had with Thouvenel—this last at Lord Cowley's suggestion.

I start to-morrow night for Constantinople, where I suppose I shall remain a week, and then go on to Syria.

I am very well and in pretty good spirits, and I feel that the more I have to do the better I shall be pleased. I have got my foot in the stirrup, and before long I hope to be firm in my seat.

Wherever I am, and whatever I become, I shall remain, dear uncle, ever

Your grateful and affectionate nephew,
DUFFERIN.

Parliament sat late, Sir James did not spare himself from diligent attendance on his duties there, and it was not till September that he found himself free to return

to country pursuits and pleasures, but with health impaired.

To Lord Aberdeen

NETHERBY, *September 5, 1860.*

My daughter's wedding being over, and the session having at last been closed, I came here yesterday. I hope that you have had the same enjoyment in looking round you from Buchan Ness, although old Ocean, even when he smiles, is not so gay as the harvest field. We have a good crop here on the ground, and if we are blessed with sunshine to secure it we shall have great reason to be thankful.

You will be sorry to hear that I am suffering very much from sciatica, and frequent acute pain is a severe trial. But I am humbly persuaded that all things work together for good, if we remember from Whose will every dispensation comes ; and having received so many benefits in a long life which I did not deserve, I will not now repine, though the evening be overcast.

September 29.—We have been blest here by an abundant harvest, and the last ten days of sunshine have enabled us to secure the crop.

I have heard only once from Gladstone since I came here. He has subsided at last into repose by the sea-side, and in his letter he did not even allude to public affairs. I greet this as an omen of the sobering effect of quiet reflection.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE LAST YEAR'S WORK

1860-61

Failing Health—Loss of Friends—Death of Lord Aberdeen—
Work in Parliament—Advice to Herbert—Committees on War
Office, Admiralty, and Public Business—India—Advice to
Gladstone—Speech on Paper Tax—Lord Herbert's Death and
Funeral.

AS the end drew near of Sir James Graham's long unselfish service to his country, conscious of weak health and waning power, yet loyal to his inspired sense of public duty, working, while work he might, but ever in humble and patient faith awaiting release from that which he had long been used to look on as 'this transitory life,' he was deeply moved by the loss in swift succession of two of his dearest friends, one older than himself, Lord Aberdeen, the other much younger, Sidney Herbert. To a third kindred spirit, Mr. Gladstone, he writes :

My heart sinks when I think of Lord Aberdeen. I cannot bear the thought of losing him. His honesty, his generous confidence, his bright example, have long been my support and guide. Yet I feel that he has survived his friends, and that he is unhappy here. He has fought a good fight. If he has finished his course, I hope and think that there is in reserve for him the great reward.

Mr. Gladstone answered :

November 27, 1860.—I imagine that a visit which I paid to Lord Aberdeen on Friday week will prove to have been the last. Though he is stated not to be in danger at the moment, he has sunk and is sinking much. For friends he is gone, for his family going, and Death hovers about a venerable head.

To my mind he has excelled every statesman now living in his sense of justice, his settled calm of mind, and the equipoise of his deliberative faculties. These are qualities that do not stir nor strike, but they leave a silent record written in the innermost conscience of mankind, and one that grows more visible and brighter as the glare of the moment dies away. . . .

We live now in anti-reforming times. All improvements have to be urged in apologetic, almost in supplicatory tones. I sometimes reflect how much less liberal, as to domestic policy, in any true sense of the word, is this Government than Sir Robert Peel's ; and how much the tone of ultra-Toryism prevails among a large portion of the Liberal party.

To Mr. Gladstone

NETHERBY, *November 30, 1860.*

When I remember who is the head of the present Government, I cannot wonder that Toryism should prevail ; and you may well sigh when you revert to the memory of Sir Robert Peel and of Lord Aberdeen.

Of all the men with whom I ever served those two were the purest patriots, most open to conviction when a public wrong was to be remedied, most fearless in their assertion of right, of truth, and of justice.

In Lord Aberdeen's case I hope that the agony may soon be past. I shall see him no more on earth, but we shall meet 'at count,' and would that I were as well prepared as he is.

But no more in this sad strain.

A few weeks later Graham and Gladstone stood together by the grave.

*From Mr. Gladstone*HAWARDEN, *December 22, 1860.*

MY DEAR SIR JAMES GRAHAM,

The sad occasion which gathered us yesterday was of itself very trying to you, but I was sorry to see you also suffer so much from the cold that it will be a great favour, and a great comfort, if we may hear within the next few days, by any hand, that you have got home without being materially worse.

We shall have many occasions to talk of our loss. It is one of those which we shall feel more, not less, as time goes on. But to look after him whither he is gone is refreshing and consoling.

I remain affectionately yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

*To Mr. Gladstone*NETHERBY, *December 23, 1860.*

MY DEAR GLADSTONE,

I am very much gratified by your kind attention in inquiring about me.

The extreme cold, and the depression consequent on the discharge of the last sad duty to a friend so much beloved by me, almost overcame me; and a long journey yesterday through perpetual snow was not reviving. I am in bed to-day, not as a matter of necessity, but of precaution, and I hope to be well again before long.

It was most pleasant to me to pass three hours with you and the Duke of Newcastle—even in such sad circumstances—on the easy terms of old familiar friends.

My daughter Helen writes for me, for I could not allow a letter so kind as yours to remain, for a post, unanswered. Under a lady's hand, I may send my *love* to Mrs. Gladstone, and I remain, always,

Your affectionate,

J. R. G. GRAHAM.

Another letter shows how Lord Aberdeen recognised his close relations with the two mourners.

From Colonel the Hon. Alexander Gordon

ARGYLL HOUSE, *December 24, 1860.*

I think it right to send you a copy of a holograph codicil to my father's will, by which you will perceive that it was his wish that none of his papers should be published without the previous consent of yourself and Mr. Gladstone.

The last letter of the year¹ is to Mrs. Herbert.

I have long urged [Graham writes] the necessity of Sidney leaving the House of Commons. It is right to begin with the step now about to be taken. Your fond but just, alarms, must not be smothered. You must watch, and if you see the necessity for greater privacy and care you must be prompt and bold in declaring it, and Sidney has no sincere friend who will not back you. His wife and children have the strongest claims.

Of himself Graham adds :

I suffered very much from my journey to London, and from exposure to extreme cold. I kept my bed for a day or two on my return here, but snow and the thermometer approaching zero are not reviving ; and for many sad reasons my heart sinks within me, and I often think that to depart would be far better.

While I live, you may rely always on my warmest sympathies and sincere affection, and Sidney has few friends who have loved him longer or better.

Of Sir James Graham's latest labours for his country, his brother Major Graham has left this record :

During these years his chief pleasure was public business, and when not a member of the Government he never shrank from presiding over important Committees of the House of Commons. It was generally said that never was there a better Chairman. And during the

¹ Given in full by Lord Stanmore, ii. 411.

ordinary sittings of the House no man was so constant an attendant.

In 1860 and 1861 he spoke but seldom. Suffering from diseased arteries and angina pectoris, he could not bear excitement, and during the first minute or two of speaking in 1861 he was in agony.

But he was never unprepared, as was well known to members who sat near him; and during those two years, on the hundreds of subjects discussed in Parliament he generally had documents in his pocket enabling him, if necessary and appealed to, to state his well-considered opinion on each—notes of the best opinions on both sides and his decision. These were generally in a large envelope—‘unused’ inscribed upon it—and I have destroyed a very large number of them.

The new year, Sir James Graham’s last, brought him an affectionate letter from Lord Dufferin, at Beyrout.

MY DEAR UNCLE,

I cannot let the year commence without wishing most sincerely that it may bring happiness to you and yours.

I have written to nobody; indeed, I never worked so hard in my life. I generally get up an hour before daylight, and it is as much as I can manage an hour’s ride or so.

I think I am doing my duty to the satisfaction of Lord John—at least he sends me very encouraging despatches approving of my conduct. In reply to a long detailed plan I sent him as to what I thought might answer for the future Government of Syria he wrote: ‘Your despatch does credit to your judgment and sagacity, and you may propose your plan to your colleagues.’

Though I have not written to you, you must not think that I do not constantly think of you, and look forward to the time when I shall be able to tell you of all my anxieties and troubles.

I am very glad I came, but if I had known how many cares and questions involving life and death, were to be thrust upon my shoulders, I do not think I could have had the heart to undertake so anxious a task.

God bless you, dear uncle. My best and kindest love to all the girls.

Health notwithstanding, Sir James Graham's voluntary services were in great demand in many Departments. In 1859, on becoming Secretary of State for War, Sidney Herbert had written to him,

I intend to move the reappointment of the Committee on the War Department, but I can no longer take the Chair. The one man who would do it thoroughly well is yourself. The public would believe in your impartiality and have confidence in your knowledge of administration, and your powers of examination are unequalled. If you would undertake that for me, I cannot say how much confidence it would give me in the course and results of the whole proceeding. You will relieve me of a great anxiety, and greatly oblige me, if you will consent to this.

Graham did consent, and in one of Herbert's last letters he writes of 'the reorganisation of the War Office, which we contemplate as coming from the Report of Sir James Graham's Committee.' Herbert had written also :

At the Admiralty the Duke of Somerset¹ will have the incalculable advantage of constant and intimate intercourse with you.

And Sir James did preside over an important Committee on Admiralty affairs.

In January, 1861, Sir George Cornewall Lewis urged Sir James to take the Chair of a strong Committee on Public Business, moved for by the Government. He undertook the duty, but with scanty results, owing to the indifference of the Leader of the House. The

¹ The Duke's daughter had married Sir James's eldest son.

Speaker, (Denison) a member of the Committee, complains :

March 12.—If Lord Palmerston thinks everything is as good as it can be in the conduct of public business, has it occurred to you why he moved for the Committee, and why he asked you to be Chairman of it ? It seems that he had no proposals to make himself, and objects to all the proposals made by yourself and others. I foolishly took it for granted, from the appointment of the Committee, that some changes were called for. If I had been aware that the mover of the Committee thought no changes were required, my course would have been somewhat different.

The late Speaker had been ready to help, being of opinion that there was much room for improvement.

From Lord Eversley

Private.—I cannot say how much I deplore the result ; this most, the reckless conduct of many members of the House of Commons. The love of talking upon almost every subject save that on which they have met to deliberate, and the consequent obstructions to the progress of public business, will soon bring Parliamentary Government into contempt, and we shall be pointed out by all Europe as having institutions which ought to be avoided rather than imitated.

I know not how to deal with my Committee in the House of Lords. . . . Shall I find you at home to-morrow ? If so, I will call at any hour at which you are likely to be disengaged.

On India Sir James Graham's aid was thus invoked :

From Sir Charles Wood

Private. March 27.—You took so much interest in the Bill of 1853, which created the Legislative Body in India, and indeed have always taken so much interest in Indian matters, that I send you these confidential papers.

We certainly must alter the present constitution of the Legislative Body, and you will see from the enclosed what are the opinions of Lord Canning, as well as of some of the leading men in my Council and in India. I very much wish you would consider the matter, for it is a very grave question, fraught with good or evil for our Indian Empire. After the holidays I shall like to talk the matter over with you.

Early in the year Mr. Gladstone had appealed to Sir James for outside support in urging on the Cabinet the propriety of cutting down their military and naval expenditure. Graham replied :

To Mr. Gladstone

NETHERBY, *January 5, 1861.*

The Army and Navy Estimates constitute the largest and most important part of the expenditure placed under the annual control and revision of Parliament. The number of men to be employed for the year in the two services, in fact, rules the amount of each estimate. The naval and military force for the year depends on the state of our foreign relations, which is known in detail and in all its bearings only to the confidential advisers of the Crown.

Hence it is their duty to frame the Estimates, to present them to Parliament on their immediate responsibility, and to defend them by such information respecting Foreign Affairs as they may think fit to disclose. If confidence be reposed in the Ministers, this information, though scant, is held to be sufficient ; if confidence be wanting, the vote is withheld, and usually the Ministers are changed.

Such are the distinct functions of the Ministers of the Crown, and of the independent representatives of the people. There are grave objections to any departure from these established boundaries.

Some of these objections Sir James Graham proceeds to point out.

Independent members expressing an opinion on the amount of the Estimate, which involves the quantum of the force, without a knowledge of the whole case, and in ignorance of the exact state of our foreign relations, assume to themselves prematurely a power which does not belong to them, and thereby fetter their own judgment when the fit opportunity arrives for exercising supreme control.

Thoughtless and inexperienced members might overlook these considerations. But if Lord Palmerston sees my name affixed to a round robin, he would say with truth, 'This man should have known better. He has served in many Cabinets, he has sat in many Parliaments, he is well aware of the respective duties of Ministers and of independent members; he might have waited to see our proposals, and to hear our reasons; others may have erred from inadvertence, he has no such excuse.'

I cannot with my eyes open expose myself to such a censure as this.

The battle of economy within the limits of public safety must be fought in the Cabinet, without external pressure. If you agree, the presumption will be strong in favour of your united decision; if you differ, the House of Commons will arbitrate after a full hearing of the case.

I have come to a decision adverse to your wishes with great regret. But my mind is clear on the point of duty, and such being the case I cannot hesitate. Your hands would not be strengthened in the Cabinet by a document open to such grave objection.

On every ground, of principle and of expediency, I am against the proposal. Place reliance on the strength of your case, and on the virtue of your colleagues, while you continue to sit in council with them.

Mr. Gladstone acquiesced, but saw another side :

January 7, 1861.—It would be nothing short of impertinence if I were to attempt to argue against the conclusion and intentions you announce. And indeed I fully admit that your reasoning is complete and demonstrative as far as it goes.

But then it seems to me that it goes to one side of the case only, and that the right and possibly the duty of representatives of the people to inform the Government upon the feeling of the country in regard to the taxation and expenditure may be as clear, especially under certain circumstances, as the right and duty of the Executive to frame the estimates according to the state of our relations ; especially at a time when the feeling of the country has for several years without doubt been a main cause of swelling those estimates to their overgrown dimensions.

However, I have only to submit, and to thank you for giving me, as you never fail to do, so clear and full a statement of your views.

After Easter the chief request for Sir James Graham's aid in Parliament came from Mrs. Gladstone. She wrote to him :

Private.

12, DOWNING STREET, *April 25.*

MY DEAR SIR JAMES GRAHAM,

You have always been so kind to me and such a warm friend that I have the less scruple in opening my heart to you about my husband.

Perhaps it may not have struck you how very deeply he would feel the kindness, how much it would please him, if you were to speak upon his Budget.

He does not know I am telling you this. It is because I know you love him—I know you take a deep interest in his career—that I venture to speak to you, and I know how he cherishes the old days, what his veneration is for Sir Robert Peel and the dear friends with whom it was his pride and pleasure to act.

You are now the only one in the House of Commons to whom that special feeling can apply, Lord Herbert being gone. Even a few words thrown in by you would refresh William's spirit, and it would come with great weight from you. You do know how he values your approbation, your affection. No one knows but myself all he has gone through in the last two years, but I

believe that the fruit will be reaped. He has waited quietly, patiently, and this I value more than all.

If I have presumed too much in writing to you, your kindness will at least forgive me.

Believe me, dear Sir James,

Your affectionate and obliged

CATHERINE GLADSTONE.

Such a request Sir James could not find it in his heart to refuse. He made an effort, and having, as usual, mastered the subject, he spoke at length—ten columns of Hansard—on the constitutional question, as to remission of the Paper Duty, between the Commons and the Lords. After an able argument, he ended by expressing his readiness to refer to the constituencies which of the two Houses should prevail.

This was his last considerable speech in Parliament. In May he wrote to Lord John Russell, on his becoming a peer, congratulations which received a cordial answer.

From Earl Russell

I thank you for your kind expressions. It is a great satisfaction to me to reflect that we have agreed on all the great questions of our time ; and we may both have an honest pride in the success of those measures which we have worked for.

I could not well continue in the Foreign Office, and attend properly in the House of Commons. But in these difficult times I could not abandon the supervision of our foreign affairs. I have great hopes that we may avoid being ourselves engaged in war ; but the elements portend a storm in Europe during the next year.

Lord Herbert's last letter to Sir James Graham is dated July 10, 1861. He was going that evening for his health to Spa, and writes :

I must see you for a few minutes before we start. I

hope you are better. I did not at all like the tone of your letter about yourself.

Yours affectionately,
HERBERT.

Lord Stanmore mentions that at the interview—

Graham was greatly overcome. He tried to attribute his emotion to other causes, but he and all others admitted and recognised that, though their farewells were avowedly only those given to a friend contemplating a short absence at a foreign watering-place, they were in fact final.

A few weeks later Herbert returned a dying man. Sir James Graham's latest effort was to attend the funeral in August, not three months before his own.

He had heard from Lady Herbert's brother, Mr. Repington :

WILTON, *August 3, 1861.*

You will like a few lines to tell you how peaceful and happy were the last hours of the dearest fellow that ever lived.

It was a noble deathbed. He was conscious even to the last ; so patient, and thoughtful for every one, giving kind words to some, advice to others, affectionate messages to some absent ones, cheerful and like himself to the end.

He had borne the journey so well that we trusted the gloomy view taken by the London doctors might be a mistaken one. But during the next day he got worse, and towards evening we became alarmed. . . . In the course of the night paroxysms of breathlessness came on, and lasted for more than two hours. All thought him gone, but he rallied, and became better and more himself than before. Several of his family were around him. He took the most affectionate farewell of all in turn, and of his children. It was a great comfort to him to have been here—the place he loved best in the world.

My sister is quite stunned with the sorrow, and can hardly yet realise that he is gone from her. But she has the blessed consolation of the firmest belief that he is at peace.

The funeral is to be on Friday. For your own sake she hopes you will not encounter the long journey. But as one of his very dearest friends she would have been very glad if you could have come, and she knows well it would be your wish. The very last thing, however, that he would have wished would be that you should suffer on his account ; if therefore you are at Netherby, she will not expect you.

She has asked Mr. Gladstone and the Duke of Newcastle, and those two kind friends who took such care of him during the short stay at Spa and the sad return, Count Strzelecki and Admiral Gawen. Besides these there will only be members of the family, and the simplest funeral—a walking one, his own labourers carrying him to his last resting-place in his own church. This is at his own particular request.

An old friend, Mr. Brewster, afterwards Irish Lord Chancellor dwells on the loss to Graham :

To you, who had looked forward to Herbert as the guardian of your posthumous fame, his death must, I fear, have been a grievous blow, to his country it seems to be an irreparable one.

I had a presentiment that he was not made for this world. His texture was too fine and pure to bear long the coat of clay which man must carry.

However, he has performed the appointed task most nobly, and, having attained in the world all that a good man could aspire to, he has gone to a more congenial one, leaving indeed a blank which no man can fill.

During his illness my thoughts were more of you than of him, knowing as I did how much you loved him, and how deeply you would feel the loss of your most attached and devoted friend. But now I am not without a confident expectation that your grief will be worthy of its object, and that you will nerve yourself to do and suffer still, as all must until their appointed time shall come, never forgetting that the first and most obvious duty of every one is to maintain his post, be that what it may, to the last, no matter who may fall around him.

Mr. Gladstone also wrote :

August 4.—As my being here has enabled me to learn more than can have been sent to you about the closing scene, I can tell you with joy it was such not only as we could have desired, but as angels might delight to look upon. He sleeps well!

The complaint seemed to relax its grip for a little, that he might say and do all as became his beautiful life and character.

You are invited to the funeral, but I see that, much as they would wish to have you were you five miles off instead of four hundred, they have done it with real scruple as regards yourself, and would feel relieved from a real apprehension of doing you harm, if you can prevail upon yourself to stay away. I know this will be difficult, yet I write in the hopes of perhaps encouraging you to do it. What *he* would wish would be that you should in every way husband a life and strength very precious to the country.

As to a proposed memorial Graham wrote to Mr. Gladstone :

NETHERBY, *August 24, 1861.*

Herbert's friends need not be under any anxiety with respect to his memory. He so lived that he will not be forgotten by the present generation, and in after times he rests under an edifice, reared by himself and dedicated to his God, which is a worthy and a lasting monument of him.

Since we parted I have been very ill. On my return home I was seized by a severe attack of gout, and I have kept my bed for the larger part of the last ten days. I am now recovering, but in old age amendment or recovery is a slow and doubtful process.

This was the beginning of the end. Of the last illness, and of Sir James Graham's home life, some interesting details, from a member of the family, will follow in another chapter.

CHAPTER XIX

RETROSPECT

1792-1861

WHEN in his later years Sir James Graham looked back on life, the words that came most readily to his lips or pen were, 'I have had my day.' And in truth a long and a good day's work he had done.

Almost in boyhood, in a critical state of Europe, by taking the responsibility of concluding with Napoleon's brother-in-law Murat an important armistice, he had scored a diplomatic success for which he received official thanks.

His next task was to take in charge and bring into model order his father's estate of some twenty-six thousand acres, thereby laying for himself the foundation of life-long political independence, and setting before his tenantry and his neighbours an inspiring example of remunerative high farming.

During the same years, by the strenuous part he took in reforming local administration, and reducing the burdens of salaries, highway rate, and poor rate, he 'rendered untold services to the ratepayers,' and showed the way to those who might attempt the same for other districts.

In Parliament, after sitting a while for Hull, for St. Ives, and for Carlisle, he attained with ease in middle

life the object of his young ambition, to represent his native county, being elected for it five times in nine years.

As member for Cumberland, in opposition he made his mark as a leader in retrenchment. In office under Lord Grey he thoroughly reformed the Admiralty, and while effecting great economies left it a model of well-organised administration. In other respects also he improved the system of public accounts, regulated pensions and superannuations, and gave vigorous support to the new Poor Law. But chiefly, in the historical 'Committee of Four,' he helped to put in shape the greatest legislative measure of his times, the Reform Bill of 1832; and in Cabinet he was first to urge upon his chief and colleagues the necessity for using the prerogative of the King to vanquish dangerous opposition in the House of Lords.

So far all went well with him. But two years later came a change that tried his principles and strength of purpose.

He had joined the Whigs conceiving their hereditary policy to be that to which he was himself inclined, and pledged—boldly to reform, but in no case to subvert, old national institutions. Chief among these were the Monarchy, the two Chambers of the Legislature, and the Protestant Established Churches. Therefore when, with Roman Catholics and Radicals, Lord John Russell denounced as grievous injustice to Ireland the appropriation of her tithes to Protestant uses, and when Earl Grey and most of his Cabinet acquiesced in this, Graham protested, and left them. On the merits of their new departure his conscience would permit no compromise. To his principles and to his pledges he sacrificed congenial office, loyal attachment to Lord Grey, friendly ties with other colleagues, and the seat for Cumberland, which else he might

have held for life. A heavy loss ; but at that price, acting with his old friend Stanley and their new ally Peel, he had the satisfaction of defeating the project. By stout resistance they compelled Whigs, Radicals, and Roman Catholics combined to drop their intended Appropriation.

Next year Graham declined high office offered him by Peel. To change his party on one question, however important, he regarded as too sudden, and, while trusting Peel as a reformer, he did not trust Peel's Tory colleagues. But for six laborious years, in alliance with Peel in the Commons and Wellington in the Lords, he worked hard to create and lead to victory a new Conservative party. The principles they put forward were exactly those with which he had entered public life—to promote all reasonable reforms, to oppose all revolutionary change.

After four years of such preparatory discipline, the party being called to office, Graham was designated for the post of Home Secretary ; but by the young Queen's refusal to part with any of her Whig ladies, Peel's accession to power was delayed for two more years. Thus it was not till 1841, when Graham had entered on his fiftieth year, that he took in hand the arduous duties long destined for him in Home Affairs.

Meanwhile he had become intimate with Wellington, and had helped to keep him in touch with Peel. Of other Tory colleagues his distrust grew less, with reason, for in fact their influence was small. Peel and Wellington, with Stanley and Graham, governed almost as they chose.

His departmental labours were severe. In England he had to cope with Chartist plots, in Wales with riots

against tolls, in the manufacturing districts with organised strikes, in Scotland with discontented miners, and with schism in the Church. In Ireland O'Connell was agitating for Repeal of the Union, Catholic priests were working up their congregations to open violence ; Orange Peers and landowners were arming their retainers. Wellington believed the country to be on the verge of civil war. To Graham chiefly, in those difficult times, it fell to instruct the Irish Government, to enforce law, to protect life and property, and provide such military force as might overawe rebellion. He had to shape the Bequests Bill, and the Maynooth Bill, and the College Bill, and the Tenants Bill, and to direct the prosecution of O'Connell. Lastly in 1845-6, he had to grapple with the Famine which hastened repeal of the Corn Law. Through all this he steadily and laboriously pursued his policy of conciliation, which drew at last from O'Connell himself the grateful remark, that Graham's statue should be placed on a pedestal with the inscription 'Justice to Ireland.' Yet on the second reading of a necessary Bill for preventing murders in disturbed parts of Ireland O'Connell combined against him with vindictive Tories and ambitious Whigs, and brought Peel's Government to an end.

Then for six years more, out of office but in Parliament, working nearly as hard as in office, Graham generously supported a Whig Government against Protectionist reaction. His was the chief speech made on their behalf against the Navigation Laws ; his pen drew the resolution that finally committed the country to the general policy of Free Trade.

Later, he was the chief counsellor of Lord Aberdeen in bringing together and in keeping together the Coalition Cabinet of 1852-5. He, with Lord John Russell, shaped

their Reform Bill. He, with Mr. Gladstone, promoted competitive examinations for the Civil Service. His was the toil combined with departmental experience and administrative skill that equipped and maintained in full efficiency two great British fleets in years when the fortunes of our army were at the lowest ebb.

Of this and other good work in which he had borne his share Graham wrote, in no boastful spirit, but to cheer Lord Aberdeen under attacks :

BALMORAL, *October 4, 1854.*

Facts are better than words in refuting calumnies. Think of what you have done.

Six months have barely elapsed since war was declared, and we have closed the White Sea, the Baltic, and the Black Sea against even the appearance of the Russian flag. We have sent a larger army to a greater distance in a shorter time than ever before was transported from the shores of England. The commercial navy has vied with the Queen's navy in the performance of this service, and without their combined operation this achievement would have been impossible. All this has been accomplished in one short summer, while a British fleet at the same time offered battle to the Russians in their northern harbours, destroyed one of their strongholds in the Baltic, and visited their fastnesses within the Arctic Sea.

But you do not stop here. Has nothing been done for the future peace of the world, and for the mitigation of the evils of war? You have admitted the rights of neutrals at the expense of some sacrifice of belligerent power; you have extinguished privateering; you have gone far to obliterate the ancient enmities of France and England by showing them how to conquer side by side; and you have taught the nations of Europe that this Western Alliance is formidable when it has reason and justice on its side.

Has your diplomacy been unsuccessful? You have obtained from Austria the recognition of the basis on which the peace of Europe is to be re-established; you have gained the goodwill of Sweden; you have kept in

check the disposition of Prussia to take part against you. With the United States of America at this juncture, when Russia counted on embroiling you, you have concluded the settlement of an angry question which has been pending for forty years, and I believe the Fishery Treaty is the first Reciprocity Treaty ever signed in America. *Pacem duello miscuit.* You have mingled peace with war.

Such had been some of Graham's chief labours ; such the spirit in which he had devoted his life to the service of his country.

And what had he looked for in return ? Not wealth, not rank, not fame, not even grateful recognition. He knew the world too well to count on that, or covet it. His one chief motive was a ruling sense of duty, his all-sufficient guerdon an approving conscience. Yet inwardly he cherished a consoling hope that some day, when his work was better known, posterity would do him justice.

Meanwhile—whoever was most to blame for it—at times he was much misunderstood, and even virulently abused. It was so in 1834, when he left the Whigs ; in 1844, when he opened Mazzini's letters ; in 1846, when he helped to repeal the Corn Laws ; in 1851, when he opposed the Anti-Papal Bill ; in 1855, when, rather than yield to the Roebuck Inquiry, he quitted office ; in 1856, when he opposed continuance of the war ; in 1857, when he condemned war with China.

The resentment of some of his Whig colleagues when he left them lasted more than ten years. In 1844, in answer to a letter from Lady Holland urging him to attend her tea-parties and ' bring with him Lady Graham and some of her very pretty children,' he writes :

September 18. Private.—I retain always a grateful

remembrance of your uniform kindness to me, and I never can forget the happy days which I have passed in your society. Relying on your kind feelings towards me, I would gladly and often visit you. But I know that your comfort and enjoyment very much depend on the circle of old friends by whom you are surrounded ; and unhappily not only am I estranged from them, but my presence, being disagreeable in their eyes, would be at best a painful restraint, and would make you very uncomfortable. I venture to say this because I am unwilling to appear ungrateful, or indifferent to your kindness.

Others of the Whigs had remained his friends. To one of these, the well-known Whip of the party, Edward Ellice, Sir James writes :

November 4, 1845.—Your note has given me real pleasure. Some of my old friends are implacable in their present anger, and appear to think that I alone am culpable. They forget all the injuries which were heaped on me, and the avowed purpose of trampling me to the ground.

But the bitterness—in fairness let it be acknowledged—was not all on one side. In selecting letters for publication, under a strict injunction from Sir James, regard has been paid to the fair fame of those on whose conduct he may have commented too harshly. But examples have been given of the resentment he expressed against old colleagues for running a Radical to turn him out of representing Cumberland, and of an after-dinner speech at Carlisle in which he made scathing comments on Lord Melbourne. Of such utterances he himself wrote :

I cannot speak in public with that reserve and restraint which are perhaps desirable. What I feel warmly I state explicitly, and I fear it is a course I cannot alter.

It was a course that led to much retaliation. When attacked unjustly, Graham hit back, and hit hard—blows that were remembered, and avenged.

But to this habit of sturdy self-defence he made one exception. Assailed often most unfairly by anonymous writers, he was at once too prudent and too proud to answer them.

On this subject two letters may serve to show his practice and his tone. To Sir Robert Peel he writes :

December 3, 1843.—No one is more alive than I am to the imprudence of contradicting newspaper reports. In my day I have been often much maligned. I have hardly ever contradicted any statement, however false. We suffer much from the hostility of the Press, but we are not its slaves. I would rather have it for my enemy than that it should be my master.

And to General Sir William Napier (the historian), at the time governing Guernsey, he gives advice :

March 12, 1844.—I should be sorry that you were engaged in a war with the Press. . . . I have some experience of the attacks of malignant editors, and I have learnt that it is wise to bear injustice with patience, and to falsify groundless accusations by conduct which will bear the test of adverse scrutiny. We all commit errors occasionally. When we are wrong, reproof is salutary ; when we are right, the sting of malignity is harmless.

In this spirit Sir James Graham suffered much dispraise in silence, but with sympathy from friends.

Mr. Gladstone [writes Sir Algernon West¹] has frequently told me that he considered Sir James the greatest administrator of his time, and the only statesman whose merits never received due recognition from the press.

¹ In *The Nineteenth Century*, January, 1898.

‘Never,’ or—for greater accuracy—hardly ever. As an exception, in 1853, when Lord Aberdeen, with much help from Graham, formed his Government, nothing could be more appreciative than the comments of the leading journal; and of all the speeches made at the General Election *The Times* placed first and applauded most one delivered by Sir James Graham on the hustings at Carlisle.

We have got a ministry [*The Times* wrote] which seems to command the approval and support of men of every class of opinion. Whigs, Radicals, and Conservatives vie in the wish to do it honour. Its *personnel* is justly lauded as comprising within itself all that survives of our political notabilities of the last twenty or thirty years.

The speeches of Sir James Graham, Lord John Russell, Lord Palmerston, Sir George Grey, and Mr. Baines will be read with pleasure as evidence of their intentions. . . . It is quite refreshing to see the straightforward manner in which opinions are stated, difficulties admitted, and solutions proposed.

With every disposition to praise the speeches, we must admit that Sir James Graham’s was, as usual, by far the most entertaining, and also the most instructive. The ease, the heartiness, the versatility, with which this veteran statesman rallies his opponents was only exceeded by the boldness with which he ventured, before a large and very mixed audience, to deal with the most popular fallacies of the day.

Sir James Graham has done good service by his sportive but masterly exposure of the Chartist delusion. He showed with much force the folly of supposing that such institutions as manhood suffrage and the ballot tend necessarily, or even probably, towards an increase of freedom, or a wider recognition of popular rights. France, Italy, and Germany are lessons not to be forgotten, and never so appropriately taught as by the lips of a candidate addressing a popular constituency. It is no inconsiderable proof of the progress of the age

that large popular meetings are becoming daily more and more able to hear the truth without offence.

So wrote in 1853 the great organ of popular opinion, and Graham confessed to his friend Lewis :

I am very thankful to *The Times* for its praise, which to me is precious, on account of its rarity.

But next year Sir James had occasion to write to Lady Graham :

October 10, 1854.—You will see in *The Times* an unkind attack on me because I am absent from my post. The journey to Balmoral was not of my seeking, and to obey the Queen I shall have travelled twelve hundred miles in the last week. Since I accepted office [in December, 1852] I have not spent a fortnight at Netherby. My conscience acquits me of neglect of duty, or of the sacrifice of public interests to my own ease and enjoyment. These unjust attacks are discouraging, but they fall light on a conscience which is at rest.

And again, on Graham's death, *The Times* was chary in its recognition, and held that to give a verdict on his claims as a statesman would be for 'the next age.' His contemporaries, they admitted, perhaps had been disposed to judge him harshly.

But of his remarkable influence in the House of Commons in his later years they added :

His support was always of immense advantage to a Government. If he opened his mouth to speak, it was said to be worth fifty votes.

His administrative ability was of a high order, and his eloquence, assisted as it was by his great stature, his noble presence, and his fine voice, was exceedingly effective. These combined made him a most formidable opponent in Parliament, and with his knowledge of detail a most valuable member of any Cabinet.

His strength lay in his power of work, and power of

argument. The celebrity of the Peelites for administrative ability was largely based on the effectiveness of Graham.

It may not be amiss here to give a sample of the hustings speech reported and praised by *The Times* in 1853.

I would have you think twice before committing yourselves to universal suffrage.

Look abroad ! There is Italy, a garrison of foreign armies. Look at Germany ! Since 1848 representative institutions have been put down, and that mighty country is a camp of hostile forces. Above all look at France ! a country once the seat of representative government, and distinguished for its success in the arts, science, literature, and almost all the accomplishments which adorn mankind. It obtained universal suffrage ; the ballot was established ; and the liberties of nearly forty millions of people now lie prostrate in the dust at the foot of a single man.¹

I scorn to deceive you, and therefore I must declare that I cannot promise to view with favour either universal suffrage or the ballot.

I am favourable to extension of the suffrage ; I am favourable to protection of the voter ; and there is nothing I will not do, in concert with my colleagues, to give effect to these views. But beyond that I cannot go.

It has been hinted that the present Government will not be anxious to bring forward a Reform Bill, because the agitation of the question might prove inconvenient to them. But I declare that if they do not, I will not continue a member of the Government. (Protracted cheering.)

As to the detail, and the proper time of proposing a Reform Bill, those are matters which, within certain limits, must be left entirely to the discretion of the Administration. (Cheers.) I ask no more than this. (Bravo.) I shall meet you again, and by the conduct of myself and my colleagues I will be judged.

¹ Against this Louis Napoleon made a protest.

The boldness of this address to constituents was not exceptional. Four years later, in March, 1857, Mr. Gladstone writes to Sidney Herbert :

By adopting Reform as a watchword of present political action Graham has undoubtedly inserted a certain amount of gap between him and me. . . . But, having referred to what I regret in his operations at Carlisle, I must not fail to mention the far-exceeding pleasure they have given me. In a period both of gross delusion and of gigantic imposture, they have been the most gallant, outspoken, energetic, and apparently successful protest against both that eye could see or heart desire ; they enthrone honesty and courage—the two great English virtues, which England seems now almost everywhere to be trampling underfoot.

And again he writes, in April, 1859 :

Is not Graham's speech at Carlisle superlative ? ¹

Sir James Graham's changes of political opinion, frankly avowed, have been exaggerated and misconceived. At the time of his death a weekly newspaper of standing did not scruple to allege that—

He was both at the beginning and end of his career a Radical of very advanced views. . . . He began life as a Radical, because he saw the people gaining in power. He continued his career as a Conservative, because he thought he saw a clear turn of the tide in favour of the country and Protestant party. He ended it as a Radical again, because, in 1859 at least, he thought democracy inevitable.

On the contrary, in 1818, to his first constituents, he pledged himself as a steady supporter of established institutions in Church and State, an advocate of moderate against revolutionary reform. In 1835-46, with Peel,

¹ For the rest of these letters, see Lord Stanmore's *Memoir*.

he promoted reforms such as in the end broke up the Conservative party. In 1859, with Lord John Russell, he objected to Bright's Radical Reform Bill.

His actual changes of party are stated correctly by the latest historian of his times. 'He had been Whig, Peelite, Conservative, and Liberal.'¹

He had been Whig. But what was Whig? 'Whig says in one syllable what Conservative Liberal says in seven!'² He had been Peelite. But what was Peelite? Peelites called themselves 'Liberal Conservatives.'³ Writ large, then, the record runs thus: 'He had been Conservative Liberal, Liberal Conservative, Conservative, and Liberal.' And the historian adds:

Like Peel, he became more Liberal, not, as usually happens, more Conservative, as he grew in years.

His change was due in part to general progress. Of popular clamour Graham took little heed, but steady public opinion, in a free country, he believed, in the end must rule.

Of landowners the true interest, he thought, lay in furthering the welfare of the whole community, manufacturing as much as agricultural; but even if home-growers suffered by free trade in food, public opinion, he told them, would never let the ports be closed again, or grant indemnity for lost protection.

As to Parliamentary Reform his guiding principle was this. For good government the House of Commons should represent not property or numbers as such, but independent and intelligent opinion. On that ground

¹ *History of Modern England*, by Herbert Paul, ii. 292.

² Lord John Russell.

³ *Dod's Parliamentary Companion*.

in 1832 he had defended against Peel the Whig restriction of the borough franchise to £10 householders ; in 1859, on the same principle, he advised inclusion of the working classes, believing them to have made intellectual and moral progress, and to have shown themselves worthy of the trust.

Graham's political philosophy was simple. Chief end, the public good ; chief means, independence and power ; subordinate but generally necessary means, office and party. Many profess the same creed ; no one was more true to it in practice.

Independence he valued highly. To party he gave a lower place.

I am a party man because I conceive that by party we are enabled to do more than a man can do singly, and because by it we are better qualified to concentrate and strengthen public opinion. It is perhaps the infirmity of human nature that we should be required to act thus, but it is necessary.¹

As to office his brother writes :

One thing he gloried in, that his bitterest enemy could not say he was overfond of office. He was always ready in defence of his principles to resign, saying that the day of resignation was more agreeable to him than the day of acceptance.

He used to remark that it was a great advantage for a man in office to have a good property and be independent in his circumstances.

Macaulay told him that was the reason why he accepted ten thousand pounds a year and voluntarily banished himself to India, in the hope of returning with an income which would make him independent, and indifferent as to high office at home.

Independence no doubt may go too far. In Parliament an 'independent' member has been defined as 'one on whom you cannot depend'—a definition ungrammatical and cynical, but not without some truth. With a man of low selfish type, if he does not depend on you, neither can you depend on him.

But with a man of nobler nature it is different. On him you may depend to do as he thinks right; and, having chosen his party on principle, in general he will think their principles and their policy right, or so near right that he can conform.

Yet occasions will arise where convenient policy and acknowledged principles are at strife, and one must choose between them. Then comes the test. Then the man of independent conscience acts as he thinks right, sacrificing, if need be, party to principle. Such men may err, but they are the salt of deliberative assemblies. And of such acts of independent conscience Sir James Graham's life presents instructive examples.

In conference with colleagues when opinions differed often by sheer intellectual and moral vigour Graham had his way. Four times only, in more than forty years, he was driven to the last argument, resignation, threatened or actual, and with these results :

1. In 1831 the Whig Cabinet would not press the King to make Peers to pass their Reform Bill. Graham threatened resignation, but Lord Grey induced him to defer it, and six months later Prime Minister and Cabinet came round to Graham's policy, and thereby carried their Bill.

2. In 1834, in the Commons, the Whig Government, including Althorp and Stanley, accepted and carried a sudden motion of O'Connell to try an Irish Judge

before a Committee of one House. Graham resigned, and to retain him the motion was rescinded.

3. In 1834 the Whigs voted to alienate to secular uses funds of the Church of Ireland. Graham with three others resigned, and owing to their opposition Melbourne dropped 'Appropriation.'

4. In 1855 Palmerston as Prime Minister under pressure yielded to an Inquiry by private members into the conduct of the Executive Government and their military and naval commanders and staff during the crisis of a great war. Rather than submit to such a proceeding, Graham, with other Peelites, resigned, and never returned to office.

Also in 1852, when 'the Gladstonian Peelites' left Graham, or, as Mr. Gladstone said, Graham left them, by standing as a Liberal, before the year was out they with him joined a Cabinet including a Radical colleague pledged to Ballot.

The question has been often raised, How came it that, with such independence, such ability, intellectual, oratorical, deliberative, administrative, and constructive, such life-long devotion to Parliamentary politics, and with Court favour, Graham never rose to the highest post?

Major Graham does not admit that this was due to want of boldness. He remarks:

In the times of the great Reform Bill, of the Riots [1841-2] in the North of England, and of the rebellious doings of O'Connell, and in the Russian War, nothing could exceed the boldness of his advice and acts, when real energy was needed.

Whether right or wrong, he was the chief advocate for the expedition from Varna to the Crimea.

I know that the Duke of Wellington expressed himself

as much gratified with the courageous vigour he exhibited when acting as Home Secretary in concert with His Grace as Commander-in-chief in troublous times.

Add to this the courage shown by Sir James in confronting popular clamour, against the Poor Law, against Catholic Emancipation, against liberty for Catholics to organise their Church as they thought best, and clamour for Mr. Roebuck's Inquiry, for continuance of the Russian War when Russia, France, and Austria desired peace, and for war with China.

Unpopularity incurred on such occasions, and still more when he upheld the duty of the State to prevent misuse of the Post Office for criminal or revolutionary plots, was one cause assigned by the Press for his never having been charged to form a Government.

Rejecting, then, the suggestion of want of boldness, there may be found in Graham's attributes other clues to his not having sought the highest place.

First, unpopularity, caused by defiance of popular clamour. Secondly, modesty. Contrary to a common impression, Sir James was a man inclined to underrate rather than to overrate his claims. Thirdly, pride. He disdained to put himself forward where he might not be welcome. Fourthly, and perhaps chiefly, love of independence. Independence might be compromised by the highest even more than by a lower office.

Also, having regard to the complexity of party relations, it may be asked, Whom could he have led ? and when ?

In 1849 the Whigs made overtures to him. But then he was opposed to Palmerston's foreign policy, to Whig finance, and to Whig coercion of Ireland without measures of conciliation. Nor would he leave Peel.

After Peel's death Disraeli invited Graham to lead the Conservative party and the Peelites. But there was to be one condition—compensation to the agricultural interest for their loss of preference in the home market. And such compensation Graham did not think feasible, or just.

In 1851 he was charged by the Queen, with Lord Aberdeen and Lord John Russell, to form a joint Cabinet of Whigs and Peelites. But that meant union with a Minister who had made himself the organ of Protestant intolerance, while Graham had taken the lead in opposing it, and for doing so was at the time unpopular. The proposed coalition therefore failed.

In July 1852 Roebuck wrote to him :

To you I look to be the leader of the Liberal party. Lord John will never again unite us. Lord Palmerston, though popular, wants the support of the sedate portion of politicians. You would, I believe, gain after a while general support.

Graham answered :

Once for all, I declare that I cannot be 'the leader.' Circumstances forbid it, into which I cannot enter. I shall labour to the best of my ability to serve the public faithfully. I seek no pre-eminence ; I have no object of personal ambition. I am quite content with my station in the ranks.

But a station in the ranks was not more possible for Graham as a Liberal in 1852 than for Gladstone as a Conservative in 1856. (See page 297.)

In December 1852, with Lord Aberdeen, he did form a Government, and no one had more influence in it than he had, at least with the Prime Minister and

the Crown. But disasters in the Russian War brought that Ministry to an end ; Graham was not asked to form another ; and Palmerston, whom under pressure he joined, lost him and other Peelites by yielding to the Roebuck Committee.

After he left Lord Palmerston's Government in 1855 [says his brother] he told me that it was his fixed intention never again to hold office. I believed him, but in his intercourse and correspondence with the leading men of his time he appeared ever to take the warmest interest in party politics ; and there was no person, however intimate with him, who did not think that he was again aiming at official life. He carried out, however, what he told me he was resolved upon, and never more accepted office.

In truth he prized office, even the highest post, only as a means to power, and in his latest years without office his personal influence was such as satisfied his desire to serve the public. Partly in debate, partly as Chairman of important Committees, partly by wise and timely advice to former colleagues and friends, he did much to guide the course of affairs. And his letters of counsel invited by such statesmen as Lord John Russell and Mr. Gladstone were valued by them not only for general business but for their personal guidance in pursuit of political objects which he himself had ceased to desire. He would rather be kingmaker than king.

Mr. Gladstone writes of him : ¹

On administrative questions for the last twenty years or more I had had more spontaneous recourse to him for advice than to all my other colleagues together.

¹ To Hon. Arthur Gordon (now Lord Stanmore).

And as to the value of such advice, Mr. Morley wrote to the late Sir Wilfrid Lawson :

THE RED HOUSE, HAWARDEN, *August 24, 1899.*

The more I study that generation, the more do I incline to put Sir James Graham in the very front for sagacity, pure sense of public duty, and for moral depth of character, all in combination. I find no letters to Mr. Gladstone so sound, so good, as Graham's.

Many letters already inserted at their proper dates will have thrown light upon Graham's work and character. But a few here added may be useful.

From Sir Robert Peel to Mr. Croker

December 13, 1838.—It was our support of the Poor Law that enabled the Government to pass it without fearful resistance. It was our co-operation in practically working the law, in becoming Guardians, Chairmen of Unions, etc., that has reconciled—where it is reconciled—the rural population to it. The defender of the Poor Law on the Committee was Sir James Graham, not the Government.

From Sir Henry Hardinge

September 2, 1842.—I congratulate you on the complete success of all your arrangements for suppressing the Chartist war. . . . You have inspired great confidence by the promptitude and vigour of your measures, and no one more cordially rejoices than I do in your well-earned reputation.

From Lord Dalhousie

CALCUTTA, *March 18, 1850.*

Everything on your side of the water does indeed look restless. One thing is good—as our Scotch folk say, 'The Lord's aye where He was,' and I don't believe He will desert us if we work steadily on in our duty, keeping our eye on Him.

I have felt the truth when dangers were both real

and imminent ; the event has proved it to me, and events will prove it again and often to us all.

From Lord Aberdeen

December 15, 1851.—A thousand thanks, my dear Graham, for allowing me to see your letters to Charles Greville and to Lewis [on the new Reform Bill, etc.]. They are admirable. I do not know when I have read so much with every word of which I so cordially and entirely agreed.

From Baron Stockmar

OSBORNE, December 15, 1852.

In one of my last conversations with you you led me to believe that you would consider it a grave error if ever Prince Albert was to assume himself the Command of the Army.

I have been myself so entirely convinced of the truth of this opinion ever since the Prince came to this country, that I was glad to have it confirmed, though but incidentally, by one in whose judgment and impartiality I have great reliance. I then promised to send you the accompanying paper, which was written more than two years ago.

I trust that after an attentive perusal you will agree with me that at that time at least we knew ourselves and our place tolerably well, and that now and hereafter we shall have little more to do than firmly to adhere to all we were able then to perceive in candour and modesty. As this question is likely to be revived sooner or later, you may keep a copy of this paper, or show it to any one of your friends who should be interested to know the real material Albert is made of.

God bless you, my dear friend.

To Colonel Phipps

NETHERBY, April 20, 1855.

Private.

I am very much opposed to the discussion of abstract questions of extreme right. In our mixed form of Government the machine would soon be brought to a

stand-still if they were insisted on; and more than half of the matters of state, as well as of society, are best adjusted by compromise and mutual forbearance. It is in this spirit that the service of the Crown is best conducted, the servants always upholding the due authority of their Sovereign, the Sovereign not counter-acting the delegated power of the public servants.

From Lord Clarendon

October 15, 1853.—The Czar seems to be peacefully inclined, but says that the two maritime Powers are determined to make war upon him, and that he shall not shrink from it, though he does not desire it.

From Lord Raglan

MALTA, April 25, 1854.

I am quite satisfied that no First Lord ever equipped two such fleets in the same space of time.

From Lord Dalhousie

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, July 13, 1854.

I congratulate you heartily on the glorious fleets with which you have covered the seas. God be with them !

From H.R.H. Prince Albert

BALMORAL, September 30, 1854.

The telegraph has reported to us the unopposed and successful landing of our expedition in the Crimea, fifty-eight thousand men in one trip ! This is glorious news, and forms an unparalleled event in history.

From Sir Charles Wood

ADMIRALTY, November 18, 1855

You will be glad to hear that we have overtaken the number of men voted. The marines are within a very few of their number; so that you may well be proud of the success of all your measures in manning and equipping the fleets.

From Mr. (afterwards Sir Richard) Bromley

ADMIRALTY, December 8, 1856.

You will be glad to hear that the naval financial business of the war has been got through successfully. Not an account or paper remained undisposed of. I feel justified in informing you, for the credit of this remarkable financial and administrative operation is due to you, as the Minister who established the system of accounts in 1832, and who so generously supported me in adapting the reforming principles of that system to the general requirements of the naval service in a state of active warfare.

To Mr. Bromley

Your letter has gratified me extremely. I am proud that the Naval Department should still lead the way and set a bright example. It is a great point established that accounts so large as the naval in war, and scattered throughout the world, can be brought into one ledger, duly vouched and posted, and submitted to an independent Board for final audit, within eight months of the close of the financial year. Great praise and thanks are due to you, which I am glad to hear that the Board in justice has not withheld.

From Right Hon. J. W. Croker

The surprise and wonder, at least with me, was the extraordinary activity, energy, and success in producing such armaments as you conjured up, I may say, both in the Black Sea and in the Baltic.

To Sir Fitzroy Kelly

October 30, 1856.—The consolidation of the Statutes, a noble work when accomplished, is treated with skill and ability in your letter to Lord Brougham. It never can be completed unless the distinction be observed between consolidation and amendment of the law.

The codification of the Common Law is the dream of theorists, not a work for practical men. But even

the consolidation of the Statute Law will be impossible, unless Parliament repose implicit faith, and pass the new Code without discussion, reserving amendments for future deliberation.

The difficulty will arise in giving to Parliament the assurance that the new Code contains no new enactments. Doubtful construction, conflicting provisions, and nice questions of 'virtual repeal' will compel the codifiers to come to important decisions, which may fairly be open to challenge. If debates on these numerous points be once commenced, they will be interminable; if they be stifled, the law may be materially changed by the authority of Parliament without due deliberation, and even in ignorance of the precise nature and extent of changes proposed.

This is a dilemma from which there is no escape. I shall be glad to discuss it with you.

From Right Hon. James Wilson

February 3, 1859.—I am quite astonished at the facts disclosed by statistical tables as to the wonderful results of the measures passed since 1842.

Of all statesmen living I have always considered that you, as the colleague and adviser of Sir Robert Peel, did more than any other man to aid the passing of those measures, and afterwards to sustain them. And I feel that it must be a source of extreme satisfaction to you to witness the extraordinary proofs we now have of their wisdom.

It remains to add the testimony of those to whom Sir James Graham was most familiarly known.

His brother and executor, Major Graham, besides what has been already quoted, has left this record :

Sir James Graham might frequently have been raised to the House of Lords, but that he always firmly declined.

In his later years he much regretted that he had not been Governor-General of India. He thought himself fitted for the post. On four different occasions it was

offered to him, but each time for various reasons ¹ he felt himself bound to decline.

He was Chairman of the Committee on West Indian Slavery, and of the Committee (1833) on Agricultural Distress. He took a leading part in alterations of the Exchequer, and introduced the Superannuation Act of Lord Grey's Government. In 1835 he brought in the Merchant Seamen's Act, described by a competent judge as the *Magna Charta* of British seamen.

I was his private secretary at the Admiralty, and again at the Home Office till June 1842, when he appointed me Registrar-General, first making me solemnly promise that I would never make a sinecure of my office ; and I can safely say that while Parliament was sitting he was engaged for many weeks together on public business not less than sixteen hours a day, scarcely seeing anything of his family.

In my opinion he had an eminently judicial mind. It was his habit to master the minutiae of every subject, not being ashamed to avow in the first instance his ignorance ; and he ever sought to obtain information from those best qualified to impart it.

In important matters he was not hurried away by over-confidence of success ; his constant habit was to forecast what would be the consequence of failure, and he gave free expression to those forebodings. Consequently by some he was considered to be of too timid a constitution ; but in reality he never shrank from responsibility, and when called upon to decide he acted strenuously and with boldness, although not unmindful of what might happen from want of success, and in that contingency not unprepared.

In serving the public Sir James Graham felt conscious that he had always with zeal and assiduity done his utmost, and never spared himself ; and he was proud to think of the many great measures he had assisted in carrying against much opposition, for the benefit of his fellow countrymen.

He was a humble-minded man, devoid of vanity.

¹ Besides public reasons, there were questions of separation from Lady Graham and the children.

He was in the habit of reading much, and the love of the classics, Greek and Latin, continued to his latest hour.

When that hour came, in the midst of severest suffering he calmly welcomed death, in beautiful language addressing each member of his family, and evincing himself a pious Christian.

I knew him well, and during the last thirty years of his eventful life I ever enjoyed his utmost confidence. He told me everything, he always said, as if I were a Cabinet Minister.

Whatever others may think of him, I know him to have been a great and good man.

GEORGE GRAHAM.

September, 1864.

Like Graham's family affections, his chief friendships were exceptionally warm and lasting. On this subject Mrs. Baring writes :

Stanley [Lord Derby] was his first and perhaps greatest friend. The love of sport was a great link, and their letters constantly revert to days spent together on the moors, or the covert-shooting at Knowsley and Netherby, where they were so often together. Another tie was their common love of the classics. Politics separated them in 1846, but they remained friends, and to the end of his life Sir James spoke of Lord Derby with the greatest admiration and interest, often recalling the fact that for many years they had every night walked home from the House of Commons together.

For Sir Robert Peel Sir James had profound respect and great affection. Towards Lord Aberdeen his feelings were very similar.

The two friends whom in later life he greatly preferred to many others were Sidney Herbert and Mr. Gladstone. But of course both these were junior to him by many years.

Of the friends specially named by his daughter three died before him.

Sir Robert Peel in many affectionate letters, and in

the last page of his Corn Law Memoir, has left ample proof of his warm regard and great respect for Graham. Lord Aberdeen showed his full confidence by taking more counsel with him, and relying more on him than on any other colleague. Sidney Herbert, had he survived Sir James, would have taken charge of all his private papers.

These three friends he lost, and without them he felt lonely, in his later years. But in Lady Herbert survived the spirit of devoted affection, and this chapter cannot be more fitly closed than by letters in which she for herself and her beloved husband, and Mr. Gladstone for himself and Mrs. Gladstone, have left on record what Sir James was to the friends who loved him most because they knew him best.

From Lady Herbert to Mrs. Baring

DEAL CASTLE, *October 28, 1861.*

MY DEAREST NELLY,

I was so touched and grateful at your finding time and heart to write to me. I do indeed so truly share in your sorrows and your loss. You cannot think how I loved him.

There was no one of whose sympathy and appreciation of my darling husband I was so sure. He was our truest friend and counsellor. Whenever Sidney was in any doubt or difficulty, he always said, 'I will go and consult Graham.' And this love was mutual, was it not ?

The account of your father's last hours is nearly identical with that of my darling's. Like him, he preserved his faculties to the last—parted with each of us separately, was happy and glad to go.

I love to think of them together now—waiting for us !

Clanwilliam¹ begs me to say how bitterly he too feels the loss of one who was at one time the friend whom he loved most and saw most of in the world ! In later years their paths differed, but the old affection remained.

¹ Earl Clanwilliam, married Sidney Herbert's sister.

You will receive this on the day when you will have to go through the last sad act we can do for those we love. May God avert any further blow from you, and may He comfort you all.

From Mr. Gladstone

HAWARDEN, *October 26, 1861.*

MY DEAR MISS GRAHAM,

Perhaps I am wrong in at once obeying the impulse to write to you. But I feel that, after so many years, I knew your father better than the world knew him, and to know him was to love him.

Those who saw him from without might admire his extraordinary powers; it was only with the privilege of a nearer view that it could be seen with what high moral gifts and Christian graces he was endowed, with what an affectionate and loyal heart, with what modesty in his estimate of himself, with what unfailing liberality and charity in his judgments of others.

My belief is that he has passed into the presence of his Maker and his Saviour unburdened with a thought respecting any one of his fellow creatures that at the last day he would wish to disavow. . . .

I could not count the times—I could scarcely count the years for which, in so many passages of public business, I have looked to him as an invaluable adviser. Suffice it to say that, especially in public administration, there is no one to whom I have resorted so uniformly and with such uniform advantage. My habit in this respect began when I was first his colleague, and ended with the end of the last session.

But, over and above the direct profit of his advice, I could not but profit morally, by seeing with what temper, what patience, what pains, he was ever ready to devote to relieving the anxieties of a friend the inexhaustible stores of his knowledge, his experience, and his most fertile intelligence.

The apparent facility with which he made the long journey to Wilton, and the manner in which he went through the sad day, had deceived me. I fondly thought he was to be much longer with us—nay, perhaps even in nearer contact.

He knew better. The uncomplaining but solemn terms in which he spoke of his own health represented what it was doubtless given to him to see ; and amidst the loss to his country and the deep grief of his friends, this at least is plain, he was ever in preparation for the change, and for him it could not come amiss.

My wife shares in all my feelings. She sincerely loved him, and I always thought he had sentiments towards her that constituted a near bond between us. With us both his memory will be ever dear and sacred.

And again (at Hamilton, in 1879) Mr. Gladstone in public uttered similar terms of praise.

Every man knew the great administrative ability of Sir James Graham ; every man knew his remarkable debating power and his inexhaustible, indefatigable industry ; but few comparatively are aware of his higher qualities.

There are two characteristics of him for which those who observed his manner and those who watched him in debate could hardly have given him full credit. Of this my knowledge of him enables me to speak with great confidence.

First, Sir James, who was thought to have some haughtiness in his manner, was undoubtedly one of the humblest men that I have ever known in public life, or perhaps out of public life.

The other quality was one the mention of which would excite perhaps more surprise among persons who did not see his interior life. His incisive power in speech was such that, as if by irresistible impulse, he dealt from time to time in expressions that were thought to savour of violence and bitterness. But I must say, having often and often conversed with him in regard to those from whom he had differed, I think that of all the public men I have known—and it has been my good fortune to know many even more estimable perhaps for their moral characteristics than for their intellectual eminence—I have never known one who was more distinguished than Sir James Graham by the charitableness, and

therefore in the highest sense the Christian character, of his judgment upon the motives and acts of men.

Such testimony goes far. Posterity, now in the judgment seat with fresh evidence before them, will surely apportion to this life-long servant of his Queen and country his due meed of praise. One thing at least is clear. He acted from pure motives. He put first the public good.

Much calumny he bore in silence, with even too great reserve. He hoped that time would bring him more justice. So much of it as did come to him in life he prized. But that was not foremost in his thoughts. He looked to a higher tribunal. With him it was 'a very small thing that he should be judged of man's judgment.' He believed in a day when the work of life would be tried 'by a juster judge than here.'

He had striven to be faithful to the light within. From childhood he had been taught to live by conscience and for duty. In manhood he had fought many a tough battle, exchanged many a stinging blow, but in a spirit ready afterwards to forgive. In late years he had grown ripe in charity. And now, on the eve of departure, looking back on life at peace with all men, he could say, with full assurance and a thankful heart :

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. . . . To do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.

CHAPTER XX

Home Life—Closing Years—Last Illness and Death.

TO meet the desire which may be felt for more knowledge of Sir James Graham's home life, his youngest daughter Helen (Mrs. Charles Baring), has been prevailed on to furnish some reminiscences especially of his closing years and last illness. She thus expresses the feeling with which she has kindly addressed herself to the duty :

DEAR MR. PARKER,

Mr. Gladstone used to say that ' Sir James Graham was the most striking instance within his knowledge of a statesman to whom posterity had done, and was doing, far less than justice.' And if this was the opinion of a friend, you may imagine how deeply his children have felt its truth, and how earnestly they have wished to see justice done to his memory.

For various reasons it has been impossible to publish his correspondence until now. Almost too late, perhaps ! But, thanks to you, who with infinite care and kindness have compiled these volumes, the public are now given the opportunity of judging for themselves of Sir James Graham's political career and character, as evolved in his own words, and in the written testimony of true friends.

In compliance with your wish I have written down some details of the peaceful and happy home life—until the end of it all, when he died at Netherby, in October, 1861.

The general reader may, I fear, find me diffuse and tedious ; if so, the remedy, of closing the book, lies in his



NETHERBY : THE GARDEN VIEW.

own hands ! But to the few still living who remember my father, that which I have written may not be wholly void of interest. With many thanks for your constant sympathy and patience, I am ever gratefully and sincerely yours.

HELEN BARING.

Mrs. Baring proceeds with her narrative.

From early youth Sir James Graham's own letters will have shown the reader his deep attachment to parents, brothers, sisters, and home. When quite a lad he spent a winter hunting in Yorkshire with an old friend of his father's, and at the close of the visit Mr. Starkey, writing in enthusiastic praise of his youthful guest, ends with these words :

He has a most affectionate heart, and dearly loves the inhabitants of Netherby. There all his warmest passions centre.

In 1821, a year or two after his marriage, Sir James Graham made up his mind to live entirely on the Netherby estate, hoping thus to relieve his father (more or less an invalid) of the cares entailed by the management of a large property, and, by his father's express wish, to carry out his own plans for the improvement—not to say redemption—of the estate.

For four or five years, therefore, he devoted himself to this task, and up to the time of his father's death, in 1824, he lived quietly at the home farm, Crofthead, with his wife and little son, for many years their only child. In a paper written by Sir James Graham in 1823 for the guidance of trustees in the event of his death he says : ' The first object of my life has been the improvement of this estate. For this I have sacrificed ambition and the

gratification of many selfish tastes'—meaning that he had for a time withdrawn from political interests and excitement, to carry out that which he considered to be his first duty.

Sir James Graham often said that those quiet years were among the happiest of his life. He read assiduously, making politics and agriculture special studies; and the rest of the time was spent in planning and effecting the improvements on the estate which he had wished to see accomplished. To the end of his life he was deeply interested in farming, often saying that it survived all other tastes. Even in the storm and stress of political life in later years he kept in close touch with the management of the estate.

At the death, in 1847, of his land agent, Mr. Yule (a very able man), many packets of almost daily letters from Sir James to him were found at the Estate Office, giving the most minute instructions as to how he should act, and the exact manner in which any difficulty was to be dealt with—no detail being too trivial to receive notice. And for over twenty years this correspondence never flagged; not even when Sir James was in office, constantly overworked, and greatly over-tired with public business.

Most of the years that I can remember were equally divided between the House of Commons and Netherby. But while Sir James was Home Secretary the press of business was so great that he hardly ever left London, except that in summer he occasionally spent a week-end in the Isle of Wight, and twice or thrice a year he escaped for a few days to Netherby. When he was a free man, we went to Cumberland as soon as Parliament was up. That was always a happy day for him, and on the

journey north his spirits rose so rapidly that he was like a schoolboy going home for the holidays. He cared little or nothing for 'Society,' and stayed at Netherby persistently, hardly ever paying a country-house visit.

In those days the Borderland seemed to be very far from everywhere, and with the exception of a few friends who made Netherby a halting-place in passing to or from Scotland we had no visitors.

Thus for months we were alone, but perfectly happy, for in the country we were so much with him, and he was, from our childhood upwards, the most wise, indulgent, and sympathetic friend. In illness his kindness and attention exceeded belief. I can so well remember that when we were children (Sir James in office as Home Secretary) a daughter¹ became very dangerously ill. During the critical days Sir James never left the house, and even in letters of business to his colleagues in the Cabinet this postscript (conscientiously copied by his private secretary) often occurs: 'Thank God! my little girl is better, and will soon be out of danger.' So utterly absorbed was he in anxiety for the children whom he so tenderly loved.

Walking, riding, shooting, fishing, or farming, one or two of us were generally with him. He took great interest in our education, sometimes reading history with us, and when absent, discussing at great length the books we mentioned to him in our letters.

When I was about sixteen years old he allowed me to act as his secretary. Sometimes I copied his letters, sometimes he dictated them to me. This was of itself an education, for if I were puzzled, or questioned him on matters which I did not quite grasp, he thought it

¹ Afterwards Lady Feversham.

no trouble carefully to explain every detail ; and, this leading on to other subjects, he seemed, in his own most luminous manner, to make *all* things clear !

He delighted in music, and, as we his children were also devoted to it, every evening after dinner by his special wish we sang duets, trios, and German choruses, with or without accompaniment, he listening intently for at least an hour, when he would return to his books and papers. Sometimes also, when ill, he would summon us to his bedside, to sing to him.

And here I think I must record that once, when on a visit to Netherby, Mr. Gladstone charmed us all by his beautiful voice, singing “Annie Laurie” and other Scotch songs (besides some of Mendelssohn’s duets with me) quite admirably. My father greatly enjoyed that evening, and often referred to it afterwards.

Sir James Graham’s habitual despondency has often been commented upon, and I am persuaded that it was constitutional, and due to low vitality.

From early manhood he had suffered from gout and rheumatism ; and hoping to keep the enemy at bay by the practice of extreme abstemiousness (amounting to semi-starvation), there is no doubt that he greatly weakened his general health. But his love of the House of Commons, and his passion for work, remained unabated.

At the close of the year 1852 Sir James Graham returned to official life, and joined Lord Aberdeen’s Government as First Lord of the Admiralty.

During those two years at the Admiralty, when the House was sitting, to my certain knowledge he was working all day and through half the night. At 9 a.m. he was in his office, writing and dictating letters, then presiding at the Admiralty Board, receiving visitors

on business, until it was time to go to the House. There he sometimes remained until two or three o'clock next morning, not always returning home to dinner.

Just at the time of the ministerial crisis in January 1855 Sir James Graham was taken ill.

The Government resigned on the 30th, and although he was ill and suffering, I find it jotted down in my diary :

February 3.—Lord John Russell called.

February 4.—Still in bed. Lord Aberdeen, Sidney Herbert, and Mr. Gladstone came to see him, and they had a long discussion.

February 5.—This morning Lord Aberdeen, Duke of Argyll, Mr. Gladstone, and Sidney Herbert round his bedside. Question, joining Lord Palmerston's Government ? My father dictated to me a letter to Lord Palmerston, declining office.

In Lord Stanmore's Memoir of Sidney Herbert I find a note from Mr. Gladstone to Sidney Herbert dated 'Admiralty, February 5, 1855, *Midnight*,' proving that Sir James—ill as he was—must have been kept more or less in consultation for over twelve hours !

February 6.—To-day, Lord Aberdeen, Sidney Herbert, Duke of Newcastle, and Mr. Gladstone round bedside, and it was settled to support Lord Palmerston ; and Sir James wrote to Baron Stockmar to that effect. My father rather better, and Lord Palmerston came to see him in the evening.

February 16.—My father gradually recovering. Although still very weak, he went to the House to-day, and spoke for an hour on Navy Estimates !

These details show that, ill or well, Sir James never spared himself in attending to public business, and when, soon after, he finally left the Admiralty, he wound up his business there with the utmost care, being most anxious to give his successor (Sir Charles Wood) every advantage, and to make it all 'plain sailing.'

At the end of the session we returned to Netherby, and Sir James thoroughly enjoyed that autumn and winter. He was extremely fond of all sport, and the weather being fine he had several good days on his moors, salmon fishing in the Esk, and later on plenty of covert-shooting. This was varied by long 'farming' days. He was in good spirits, glad to be free from the cares of office, but very assiduous in keeping up the correspondence with political friends.

Towards the close of 1856 a cloud darkened the happy home, owing to the serious illness of my mother, and this was a haunting anxiety to my father. She lingered for a year, and although from time to time she appeared to rally, there was no lasting improvement, and it was beyond words pathetic to watch the gradual extinction of hope, when from month to month the shadows deepened, and my father at last realised that the end was at hand.

They had been hardly ever separated, and if she were absent for a few days only the time to him had seemed interminable. His letters to her were most affectionate and open. On October 31, 1854—under the influence of some anxious news—he writes to her from the Admiralty :

We have no despatches, no messenger ; the silence and delay are ominous, and we have received this afternoon a most unfavourable report. . . . I am rejoiced that I am here and at my post when real difficulties and dangers have arisen. As you are not by my side, you will pray for me, that I may be guided in the right path, and do my duty firmly and efficiently.

And I venture to give a few words from another letter written just after some danger escaped :

It is only when I think of being taken from you that I know how I love you. You have been the best and

fondest of wives to me, the pride and ornament of my youth, the comfort and surviving friend of my age.

In the summer of 1857 it became evident that the journey to Netherby would be beyond Lady Graham's strength, and she was therefore moved to the Isle of Wight, where in late autumn she died.

During the last two months of her life Sir James never left her. He was full of tender sympathy for her weakness, reading to her, talking often of their past happy days, or holding her hand in his, speaking soothing words of hope and deep faith in God's eternal mercy.

After my mother's death, my father's health visibly declined, and although he made a great effort to subdue his sorrow, it seemed sometimes to overwhelm him during that sad winter at Netherby.

Mercifully, however, home interests and politics constantly occupied his thoughts. He received from political friends, and wrote, many letters. I find recorded in my diary :

December 6, 1857.—Father not well, and in bed. He dictated letters to me all the afternoon.

In the early spring of 1858 we returned to London, and throughout the session Sir James was in close attendance at the House of Commons. At Netherby in the autumn his daughters seldom left him, but during a short absence he wrote to them :

September 10, 1858.—I do not get on without you both ! Netherby is dull without my beloved children. . . . I am most anxious constantly to hear from you, and your kindness in one of you writing to me every day gladdens me much.

A few days later he went to Haddo, to stay with Lord Aberdeen, and wrote from thence :

September 20.—I am off to-morrow to Fasnakyle. I send you a letter from dearest Mione [his daughter-in-law, Lady Hermione Graham, to whom he was devoted], who seems to be very happy there, and, next to my own darling girls, she is the companion on my homeward journey whom I shall like best. . . . My fondest love and blessing attend you all. Kiss the dear grandsons¹ for me, and say how I long to see them at Netherby.

Always considerate and kind to his servants and dependents, he acutely felt the loss of his old farm-bailiff, who died this autumn from the effects of an accident at the farm ; and in writing to Mr. Page—the best doctor in Carlisle—Sir James says :

An old and faithful servant of mine, whom I regard as a friend, met with a most serious accident on my farm last night. . . . The immediate treatment requires the utmost skill. I turn to you, and should be obliged if you would come as soon as you can. I am very anxious about the case.

The winter of 1858 was spent at Netherby, Sir James keeping up an active correspondence with his political friends. They constantly referred to him for his opinion on passing events, and for his advice in their own particular affairs.

Returning to London early in 1859, Sir James was in close attendance at the House of Commons, but in very failing health from the heart-trouble which eventually proved fatal. He writes from Grosvenor Place, to one of his daughters :

March 26.—I was not very well yesterday evening, and was thus prevented from either speaking or being present at the debate. I must screw myself up for Monday, and

¹ Lady Feversham's elder sons, then little boys.

I *am* much better this evening. It was one of those spasms in the chest, which sometimes seize and alarm me.'

A few days later Lord Derby was defeated on his Reform Bill, and appealed to the country.

A general election took place, and on April 20 Sir James Graham travelled north, and on arriving at Carlisle addressed a large meeting in the Market-place. He was much exhausted by the effort, and on reaching Netherby went straight to bed, where he remained for four or five days. He was, however—greatly against his doctor's advice—determined to go to Carlisle for the nomination on the 28th, and stood at the hustings for four hours in a bitter east wind. Next day he went again to Carlisle, and was, for the last time, returned as member for the Border City. He was very much knocked up by the excitement, the cold, and the fatigue, and stayed at Netherby for many days afterwards to recruit his strength. He wrote thence to one of his daughters :

May 12, 1859.—On this day forty years ago I proposed to your dear mother, and was accepted by her. I still regard it as the happiest anniversary of my life. Although she is gone, I hope to behold her again—to escape to that land of the blest, and to exchange 'the tumults of earth for the calmness of heaven.' I delight in thinking of her ; my age and her loss endear her children to me, . . . and I give you all from the heart my blessing. . . . I could not help writing this to-day, though the reflections are perhaps too solemn for a letter.

During the two succeeding years, Sir James Graham was as devoted as ever to Parliamentary business, and attended at the House of Commons with great regularity. But he was in reality no longer able to stand the fatigue,

and was often laid up at home—sometimes in bed—for days together.

His patience and temper never failed, and he took the same unflagging interest in politics, in the home life at Netherby, and in his children's affairs, as in former years.

In late summer of 1860 I married Lieut.-Colonel Charles Baring, and perhaps I may be pardoned for giving here two or three letters from my father after I had left home. They show the depth of his affection for his children, and this must at the same time excuse his over-appreciation of their merits.

To Mrs. Charles Baring

August 27, 1860.—I was gratified beyond measure by hearing from you this morning. I may say that since we parted you have not for an hour been absent from my thoughts.

To say that I do not miss one of the greatest comforts of my life would be ungrateful towards you and sadly opposite to the truth. But I hope that I have gained a son, and, if your husband value as he ought the prize which I have given him, I am certain that I shall have a place in his affections. A gallant man is always tender-hearted.

NETHERBY, *October 2.*

You will receive this letter on your birthday, the first ever passed by you not under your father's roof. It will find you established in your own home under your husband's care. I cannot wish for him that you should be a better wife than you have been a daughter to me and to your mother.

That mother is gone. I cannot long remain, and I hope and pray that your marriage may be blessed, that you may live long and happily, and that we may be reunited in that world beyond the grave where sorrows and partings shall be no more.

Stanley¹ is a comfort to me, and his presence in some degree relieves the sadness which the loss from my home of children whom I love so much would have occasioned.

NETHERBY, *November 27.*

I am afraid that Persigny is about to leave England and to accept office at Paris. If you have an opportunity, say a kind word from me both to him and to her. I shall never see a French Ambassador whom I shall esteem so highly, or consider so friendly to England; and as to his wife, she is charming! I do hope that I may have the pleasure of seeing them some day once again.

Let me know when you have fixed your day for coming here. It will be a happy day for me. I shall not see many more three months, and I hope never again to be so entirely separated from you.

In early December we joined Sir James at Netherby. On the 14th the death of Lord Aberdeen, to whom Sir James was sincerely attached and whom he held in true reverence, was a heartfelt sorrow. On the 19th, with deep snow on the ground, he made the effort of travelling south to attend the funeral at Stanmore. Bishop Wilberforce, who read the service, records that the funeral was most impressive, and that among the pallbearers he specially noticed 'Sir James Graham's tall kingly figure,' with the snow falling on his bare head.

Sir James returned to Netherby—thermometer at zero—greatly depressed in spirits, and was in bed for some days afterwards to recover from the effects of that mournful journey.

In 1861 there was rapid failure of strength, and, although Sir James constantly attended the House of Commons throughout the spring and summer, there were frequent intervals when he was laid up at home.

¹ His younger son, an able and gallant naval officer.

Towards evening, however, he complained of severe pains in the chest, and general discomfort. We had sent early for Mr. Page, but he had been detained and did not arrive till midnight.

By that time considerable breathlessness and other serious symptoms had been developed. The doctor gave him a sedative in the hope of securing a few hours' sleep, and at first the remedy seemed likely to answer.

But between four and five in the morning of Friday, October 25, the anniversary of my mother's death, we were all summoned to his room, and I saw at once, in the beloved face, that the great change had come.

He was quite calm, and quite conscious. Of his children only two were, unavoidably, absent, and to those two he sent special and most loving messages of farewell.

The four present knelt in turn by his bedside, and, although very breathless, to each one he said all that was most tender and most appropriate; and he bade his daughter-in-law (Hermione), whom he loved as his own child, to bring up her children to be like herself, adding, 'I am fond of little Dick,¹ let him remember me.'

In early morning Sir James's brother, William Graham, rector of Arthuret, had been summoned, and when he came into the room Sir James held out his hand, and said, in Greek, the lines from the *Iliad* which he had often told me he considered most beautiful :

μοίραν δ' οὐτινά φημι πεφυγμένον ἔμμεναι ἀνδρῶν,
οὐ κακὸν, οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλόν, ἐπὴν ταπρῶτα γένηται.²

My uncle was much devoted to his brother, and could

¹ The present Sir Richard Graham of Netherby.

² . . . when the day of destiny is come,
Nor brave nor coward can escape that day.

EARL OF DERBY.

hardly speak ; but presently, when he had regained his self-control, he knelt by the bed-side, and my father said to him, ' Pray that I may be patient,' adding, in a lower tone : ' It is appointed unto all men once to die ; and after this, the judgment.'

About nine o'clock he urged the doctor to leave him and go to others who might still benefit by his care, that for him there was nothing more to be done, and he did not wish his agony prolonged.

As the day dawned, he asked the hour, and when we told him he said, with pleasure, ' Then I shall see the light of day once more.' He noted all the symptoms of death with strange accuracy, and with relief, saying, ' My sight is not so good as it was,' and, asking if his pulse were weaker, he added in a low tone, ' I *hope* it is !'

Thus time wore on, and, his mind remaining perfectly clear, he gave instructions to his brother as to the exact spot in Arthuret churchyard where he wished to be laid.

About eleven o'clock there was a sharp spasm of the heart, and when he partially rallied he turned to me and said, ' Ah ! I thought it was over then.' But throughout the weary hours he never showed the slightest impatience, only murmured words of affection to his children, and spoke of his trust in God's mercy. About mid-day he died.

On Wednesday, October 30, he was laid to rest in the place he had chosen in Arthuret churchyard. Many of his former colleagues and friends had offered to come north to attend the ceremony, but in accordance with Sir James's instructions the funeral was absolutely private, attended only by near relations.

On leaving Netherby the sun shone out upon the old place, so dear to him throughout his life ; and outside the

park gates the tenants, with heads uncovered, fell in with the procession, and many old friends and pensioners of the humblest class stood by the roadside crying bitterly as the funeral passed by.

There could indeed be no doubt that in his northern home 'he was a man greatly beloved.'

That he was mourned by many, far and near, was proved by the sympathy shown in the letters written to the family.

His nephew, Lord Dufferin, was at the funeral. Sir James had been his guardian, and regarded him almost as a son. A day or two after leaving Netherby, Lord Dufferin wrote to me :

It was, indeed, a great consolation to me to be with you on that terrible day, and to feel that our common grief would only render closer and more lasting the affection which binds us all together. . . .

The joyous days of long ago at Netherby crowded back upon me with heart-breaking vividness. Netherby will never again be the same to any of us, will it ?

But after all, we must not mourn too much. His life was happy, and his death blessed, and he has passed into the kingdom of peace, love, and unending joy, where, please God, when this short feverish life is over, we shall all meet, never to part again.

Again, in later years Lord Dufferin wrote to me :

In looking over my mother's letters I have come upon one or two such affectionate ones from your father to her, in early days. . . . I am struck by the tenderness and the deep religious spirit which breathes through them, together with the strain of deep melancholy.

It cannot therefore be surprising that those who knew Sir James best were unable to comprehend the harsh and unjust judgment of the outer world. He himself was fully aware of it, and used sometimes to say that when his

correspondence should be published, many would admit that he had been often misjudged and misunderstood. But pride prevented his ever seeking to justify himself in public, if wrongfully accused or blamed.

Many of Sir James Graham's letters (trifling in themselves, and not worth publishing), sometimes only letters of courtesy, or offering places in his Department, are so gracefully and kindly worded, that I regret their not seeing the light of day, for they illustrate his generous and noble qualities.

He had special sympathy for the poor and the unfortunate, and would take any trouble to help them out of difficulty.

A very religious man, profound and luminous in thought and expression, humble-minded as to his own gifts, but very appreciative of talent in others, incapable of spite or envy. His manner was reserved and dignified, sometimes rather contemptuous of folly and meanness, but he was large-minded, and ever ready to forgive those who erred against him by word or deed.

About a year after he died, a short Memoir of him was given me by a friend. I can remember writing on the title-page the familiar words :

He was a *man*—take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

And now, in these closing days of my own long life, I *know* that, in the many years since we parted, I have never seen his equal.

HELEN BARING.

APPENDIX

THE Annual Register of 1861 contains a pleasing record of Graham's characteristic personal aspect and bearing, as known to men of his time.

Sir James was of commanding stature, and noble countenance. In youth eminently handsome, age had given a massiveness to his form and a strength to his features, which arrested the attention of his auditors. His delivery was calm and impressive, and probably no contemporary speaker has been able so entirely to command the undivided attention of the House of Commons. His knowledge of business and richness in facts, with his Parliamentary experience, rewarded attention in even the least important concerns. He was a good scholar, a careful reader, both of facts and of men, and no one was more happy in seizing upon phrases which expressed the popular feeling of the moment in appropriate quotation and in pungent though polished sarcasms.

It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that considering the variety and solidity of his acquirements, his great application, the logical and constructive nature of his mind, his personal advantages, and powers of impressive and convincing eloquence—Sir James Graham was the most thoroughly accomplished statesman of his day.

The late Dean (Bradley) of Westminster was inclined to rank him foremost of speakers whom he had heard in the House of Commons; and the late Lord Thring, as a young counsel, was more impressed by Sir James Graham's commanding manner and ability than by any other Chairman of Committees before whom he had practised.

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